

**UNDER
WESTERN
SKIES**

MORTON

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A SKETCH MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE TEXT OF THIS BOOK





GROUNDS

HUDSON BAY

CREES

CREES

ASSINIBOIS

Churchill Fort

Nelson R. Forts

Port Nelson
York Fort (Ft. Bourbon)

Gordon Ho. (The Rock)

Oxford L. & Ho.

Jack R. Ho. on Little Playgreen L.

Lake Winnipeg

Winnipegosis Lake

Manitoba Lake

Fort Alexander
Fort Maurepas No. 1 & No. 2

Frobisher's Ft.

Lake of the Woods

Ft. St. Pierre

Ft. St. Charles

Alex. Henry's post

Portage-la-Prairie

La Souris Ft.

Brandon Ho.

Pembina Ridge

Pembina R.

Grand Coteau de Missouri

Regina

Touchwood Hills

Humboldt Ft. Alexandria

Melfort

Birch Hills

La Corne Ft.

Tipawa

Rapid Inds Francois Finlay

Lac La Ronge

Portage du Traile

Fairford Ho.

Canoe R.

Bedford Ho.

Wollaston L.

Reindeer Lake

Black R.

Churchill R.

Nelson R.

Hayes R.

Fox R.

Split L.

Burntwood R.

Grass R.

Indian Water-Way

Minago R.

Indian Water-Way

Cedar L.

Moose Lake

Cranberry Portage

Beaver L.

Carrot R.

Ft. Bourbon

Red Deer R.

Dauphin L.

Kamsack

Ft. Pelly

Ft. Dauphin

Assiniboine R.

Portage-la-Prairie

La Souris R.

Turtle Mt.

Pembina R.

Rainy R.

Rainy L.

Qu'Appelle R.

South Fork

North Fork

Black R.

Canoe R.

Bedford Ho.

Wollaston L.

Reindeer Lake

Churchill R.

Nelson R.

Hayes R.

Fox R.

Split L.

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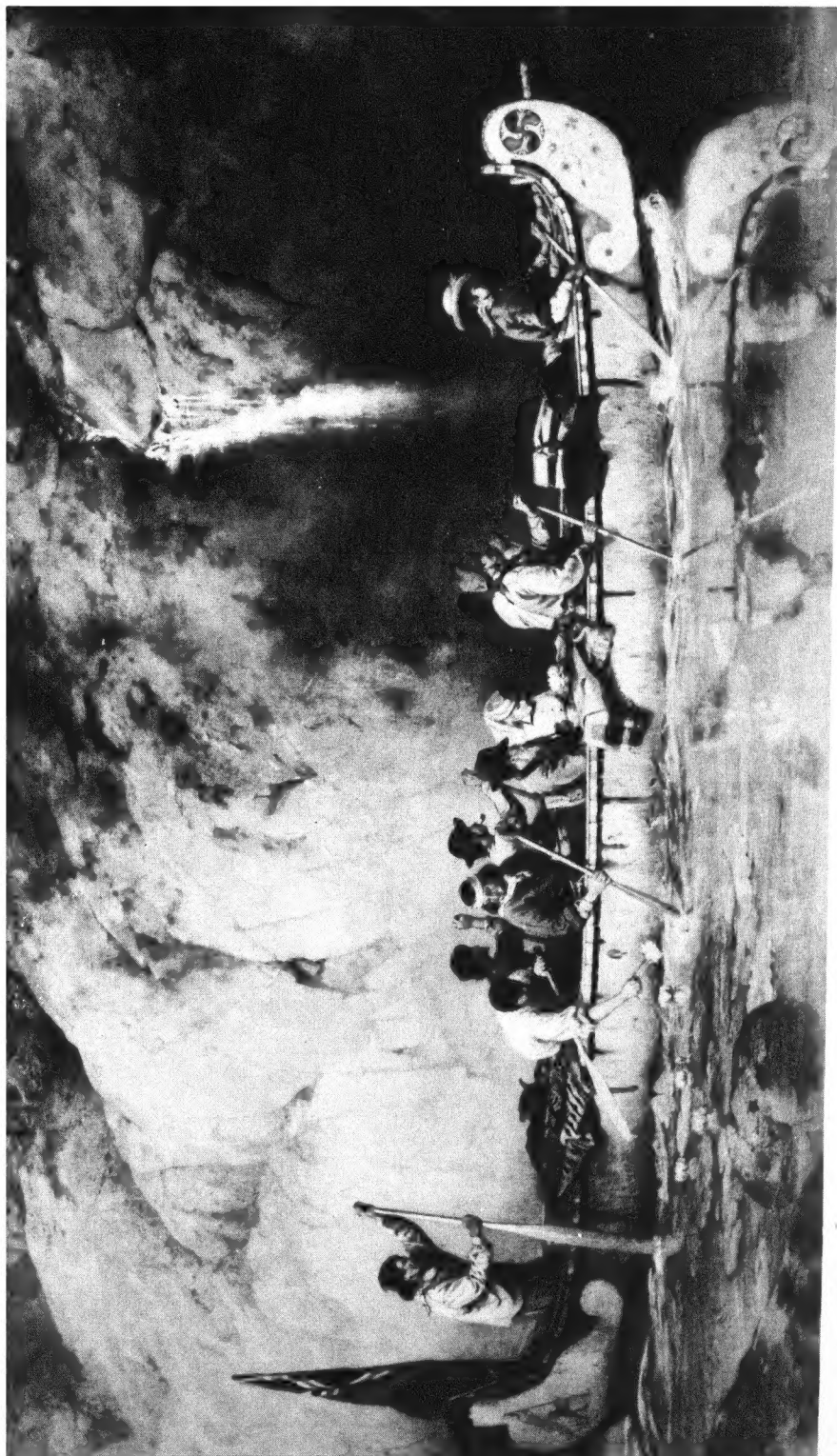
Dauphin L.

Kamsack

Ft. Pelly

Ft. Dauphin

UNDER WESTERN SKIES



Lord and Lady Monck in a Hudson Bay Canoe

From painting by Mrs. Hopkins

UNDER WESTERN SKIES

being a series of pen-pictures of
the Canadian West in early fur trade times

by
ARTHUR S. MORTON



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**DEDICATED
TO
VIVIAN BROWN MORTON**

Preface

The contents of this volume first appeared as a series of articles in the *Star-Phoenix*, Saskatoon. They are now published with the kind permission of the editor of that Journal. Acknowledgment is hereby made to Mr. J. S. Woodward, the editor, for his hearty co-operation in the task of awakening a more general interest in the history of the land in which we live.

The generous appreciation which the articles have met over the wide area in which the *Star-Phoenix* circulates has suggested that they might well be reproduced in a more permanent form. Adjustments have been made in the articles to adapt them to the standards prescribed by publication in book form.

Where historic characters like Hudson, Groseilliers, La Vérendrye, and the like, are treated, the aim has been to avoid repeating their well-known history; rather, to draw attention to interesting features which are usually left out of the picture. The result is that the perspective in which such men are seen is to some extent adjusted, in keeping with the stage on which they appeared.

Most of the contents of this volume were written before I enjoyed the great privilege of study in the rich Archives of the Hudson's Bay Company. The sketches, however, of William Pink, James Isham, Matthew Cocking, William Tomison, Philip Turnor, James Knight and William Stewart, have been possible only through my researches in Hudson's' Bay House. My great indebtedness to the Governor and Committee for permission to see and use the materials involved is hereby sincerely acknowledged.

ARTHUR S. MORTON

University of Saskatchewan

CHAPTER I.

The Prairies and the Buffalo

Why the Prairies?

How many of those who make their living out of the Prairies, or who motor across the expansive plains of the west, ever ask why this region is bare of trees; why it is rather the natural home of the grasses, as it was in olden times, and of wheat, as it is with us today. True to our un-intellectual Anglo-Saxon ancestry, we take life as we find it. We bring our brains, and we have them in plenty, to bear on our world to make it yield us a livelihood, and beyond that we devote ourselves only to our social pleasures and to politics. We rarely ask the intellectual's fundamental question: Why? Why are things as they are? Not many of us, if asked why the prairies are prairies, could give any but the vaguest of answers.

It is only part of the reply to say that it is lack of moisture. If the comparatively slight precipitation which we have, say fifteen inches in the year, were evenly distributed through the twelvemonth, the present prairies might well have been a vast forest region, like that to the north of us. Trees need an even distribution of moisture, but our precipitation is seasonal; it comes mostly in the spring and early summer, and during the winter as snow. It is the long mid-summer of heat and drought that is unfavourable to the growth of trees, at any rate of trees with heavy foliage. On the other hand, the grasses are well-adapted to our climate. They germinate and grow rapidly with the spring rains and

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with the increasing warmth of the days. When the drought comes they are past their great period of growth; they "rest" and put such moisture as they get to bringing their seed to maturity. Moreover, the grasses get the most out of the summer showers, which penetrate but a short distance into the soil and do not often reach the deep roots of the trees.

Lack of moisture is, however, but one factor in the nexus of influences making this a prairie region. A very important feature is the dry and unceasing winds. Like demons with an unquenchable thirst they lick up such moisture as the land enjoys. They suck up even the moisture exuded from the leaves of the trees, for one of the processes in a plant's life is its "transpiring" moisture from its foliage. With the warm summer weather, but especially with the hot drying winds of July and August, the transpiration of the leaves of the trees is much greater than would be the case in the calm and humid valley of the St. Lawrence, for example. If the tree is to be healthy and strong, it must make good this transpiration from the moisture in the soil. "Aye, there's the rub!" The necessary moisture is not there to be had, at least not in the deep soil at the root of the trees.

It is this series of influences which determines for the prairies what kind of trees can support existence upon them. The trees with large leaves and thick foliage would be subject to enormous transpiration and would make a proportionate demand upon the moisture in the soil. In low spots to which our summer deluges drain, or in one of our wet seasons, they might thrive, but in a year of drought their growth would be checked, their life sapped. Thus it comes about, that only trees with small leaves and sparse foliage,



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as for example the birch, the aspen, and the poplar, are indigenous to the prairie region. The so-called Manitoba maple does well in many parts of Manitoba, for the normal precipitation there in the summer is perceptibly greater and more evenly distributed through the months than it is farther west. Even the small-leaved, sparsely foliated birch, and aspen, and poplar, except in favourable spots, preserve but a slender existence. The grasses alone thrive. This is of necessity a prairie region.

Not all the area that is now prairie was such in ancient times. Old timers say they cannot understand why the region south of Saskatoon is called Moose Woods when never a moose had been seen there. The answer is that formerly the wooded belt extended thus far to the south, at least as park grass-land. Captain Palliser, exploring for the British Government in 1859, judged that the original line, where the forest and prairie had met, ran from the Touchwood Hills westward to the Moose Woods and passed south of the valley of the Battle River. Prairie fires have eaten northward into the forest and thus expanded the grassy plains. When Anthony Henday, the Hudson's Bay Company's servant, passed inland from York Factory in 1754, to spend the winter trapping in the sight of the Rockies, he travelled on the prairies keeping, on the whole, near the edge of the woods. Almost all the way he was killing moose, which is forest game and only comes into the open to escape from flies. Near Humboldt, at the crossing of the South Saskatchewan near Hague or Fish Creek, in the Eagle Hills, south of the Battle River and in the upper valley of the Red Deer River of Alberta, his band was killing now moose

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from the woods, now red deer and buffalo on the plains. The fires lit by the Indians to signal to the camp where the buffalo were to be found—fires fanned by the wild winds of the plains—have driven the forest northward. In historic times the boundary between the grass-lands and the woods has been, for the most part, the North Saskatchewan River, whose broad stream has acted as a shield to the forest belt.

The Buffalo on the Prairies

Much has been written about the prairies as the battlefield of the Indian tribes, and fascinating accounts have been given, for example, of the Crees stalking the Blackfeet. The story of the struggles of the different kinds of wild animals on that same battlefield remains, and from the nature of things will remain, untold. The great danger to all animals alike on the open prairies was, as it was for the Indians, that they could be seen from afar. Speed in flight was, therefore, one of the first requisites for the survival of the fittest. With the exception of a few of the smaller and weaker animals,—the gopher, the badger, and the fox, which found safety by burrowing underground—those beasts which managed to live on the plains were of the swiftest, the gray wolf, the antelope, the red deer and the buffalo. The next necessity was that the various beasts should stand together in the hour of danger. In a sense, the animals on the prairies, long before our Grain Growers and our Wheat-pool, saw that they must rally to one another's support, must co-operate in the interests of the class if they were to manage to live. The most spectacular warfare in the animal world was that between the gray wolves and the

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buffalo. The safety of the buffaloes lay in their numbers and their standing together as a herd. Success came to the wolves by hunting in packs. The lesson which the struggle to exist taught the animals of the plains was unity, mutual help.

When the buffalo cow calved, she went out from the herd to some hollow near by where, in about forty-five minutes, she brought her young into the world. Should a wolf appear on the scene of her travail, a significant snort on her part brought the bulls to the point of danger. Seton-Thompson gives us a memorable picture of a toddling buffalo calf being shepherded back to the herd by its mother, behind a screen of six or eight buffalo bulls, facing the wolves with lowered horns. Within four days the calves were strong enough on foot to drift with the herd across the plains. Naturally, in a world of such danger, the calves kept close to the cows, but what is remarkable is that they continued to do so long after their period of sucking was past. It is said that one might see a cow with her calves of three years past still grazing at her side. A hunter says: "A pathetic sight was sometimes witnessed when the mother of one of these families was killed at the first shot. They were so devoted to her, they would linger and wait until the last one could be easily slain." It might almost be said that something akin to family life was developed in the buffalo amid the dangers of the plains.

Then too, there was something analagous to clan life. In a band probably all the buffaloes were more or less directly related by blood to one another and were accustomed to graze together. When they scattered over the prairie to

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feed, they did not wholly lose touch with one another, but wandered together within the three or four hundred miles, which was the range of the band. As winter came on they all drew in towards their wintering ground in some bush country, where they could find shelter from the winter blasts. Curiously enough, it was not the bulls who guided the wanderings of the band, but the older cows. These seem always to have kept the necessity of drink before their minds. Early in the morning the herd would be busy grazing, and they knew the value of a little rest after a good meal. Then, in the later forenoon, some wise old cow would start for the slough or the river, and the band would drop into a file behind her. Similarly, it was some old cow which led the band in the spring from their wintering ground out to the open plains. "Some old cow, with a bunch of 50 to 100 followers turns her nose northward. Their grunting spreads an epidemic of unrest, and from every valley a long black string pours forth," is said of the southern herd that wintered on either side of the International Boundary.

This habit of living and acting together made for the safety of the band in the face of the wolves. Two buffaloes could always cope successfully with a single wolf. Even a band of wolves would not dare to attack a herd of buffalo. Their chance came with the calving mothers, or when the calves were scarcely strong enough to keep up with the herd, or when some foolish buffalo straggled away from his band, or when the old buffalo bulls were ruthlessly driven out of the herd by the younger bulls.

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The Buffalo Population

The safety of the buffaloes lay in their herding instinct. In bands of some size they could hold their own against the gray wolves of the plains, and grow in numbers. However, had their food supply been limited, a struggle to live must have been precipitated, which would have led to the destruction of the weak, and to the limitation of their numbers in proportion to the food obtainable; but the wide prairie offered an almost endless grazing ground, and one which was constantly being extended at the expense of the forest-belt by prairie fires. Thus the herds continued to grow till their numbers were such that they seemed, to the fur-traders, to blacken the plains. Of course, there were factors at work tending to keep the numbers down. When a herd was on the run, if it came upon any obstacle such as a river, those at the back pushed their fellows at the front onward regardless of consequences; it might be to a collective grave in a quicksand, or to a watery grave in the Saskatchewan. Or again, in the migration in early spring a whole herd might be crossing the treacherous ice of the river and sink down to death. John Macdonald of Garth, so-called to distinguish him from several other Johns of that name already in the North-West, describes his journey down the Saskatchewan in May, 1793. "The innumerable herds of buffaloes . . . (were) crossing in such numbers that we often got our canoes amongst them and shot hundreds without need. There lay sometimes upwards of a thousand dead on some low fields, drowned while crossing in spring on the ice and washed ashore."

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Another fur-trader, John Macdonell, brother of Miles Macdonell, first Governor of Selkirk's Colony, describes the scene as his canoe passed down the River Qu'Appelle from the neighbourhood of the present Tantallon, Saskatchewan, in the spring of 1795. "Observing a good many carcasses of buffaloes in the river and along its banks, I was taken up the whole day with counting them and, to my surprise, found I had numbered, when we had put up at night, 7,300 drowned or mired along the river and in it. It is true, in one or two places, I went on shore and walked from one carcass to the other, where they lay from three to five files deep." Alexander Henry, the younger, who wintered on the Red River, made these entries in his journal: "Apr. 1st (1801) One of my men found a herd that had fallen through the ice in Park River [North Dakota] and all had been drowned; they were sticking in the ice which had not yet moved in that part. The women had excellent sport raising the back fat and tongues. . May 1st. The stench from the vast numbers of drowned buffalo along the river was intolerable.

May 2nd. Two hunters arrived in a skin canoe from Grandes Fourches with 30 beaver and 7 bear skins. They tell me the number of buffalo lying along the beach and on the banks above, passes all imagination: they form one continuous line, and emit a horrid stench. I am informed that every spring it is about the same." It has been calculated that one dead buffalo in every ten yards of the thirty-five miles referred to by Henry would total 20,000 carcasses along the river bank. Vast as such annual losses were, they did not perceptibly reduce the ranks of the herds.

THE PRAIRIES AND THE BUFFALO

H. Y. Hind, the explorer of the valleys of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan for the Canadian Government in 1858, says: "Red River hunters recognise two grand divisions of buffalo, those of the Grand Coteau and Red River, and those of the Saskatchewan. . . . First with respect to the Red River range: The animals winter on the Little Souris and southeasterly and beyond Devil's Lake, and thence to the Red River and the Cheyenne. Here, too, they are found in the spring. Their course then lies west towards the Grand Coteau de Missouri, until the month of June, when they come north, and revisit the Little Souris from the west, turning round the west flank of Turtle Mountain to Devil's Lake, and by the main river [Red River] to the Cheyenne again. . . . The great western herds winter between the South and North branches of the Saskatchewan, and south of the Touchwood Hills; they cross the South Branch in June and July, visit the prairies on the south side of the Touchwood Hill range, and cross the Qu'Appelle Valley anywhere between the Elbow of the South Branch and a few miles west of Fort Ellice on the Assiniboine. They then strike for the Grand Coteau de Missouri, and their eastern flank often approaches the Red River herds coming north from the Grand Coteau. They then proceed across the Missouri up the Yellow Stone, and return to the Saskatchewan as winter approaches, by the flanks of the Rocky Mountains." The range of the individual band was probably not nearly as wide as this suggests.

Buffalo wintered in the brush country south of the main Saskatchewan, in the neighbourhood of the Birch Hills, Kinstino, Melfort and Kamsack. Alexander Henry, the elder, in the winter of 1775-6 saw a herd somewhere not far from Mel-

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fort, "extending a mile and a half in length and too numerous to be counted," grazing quietly in the snow. When Henry and his party took refuge in a bluff from a blizzard, he grew alarmed at the sight of a band heading for shelter in the same place. "Their numbers were so great that we dreaded lest they should fairly tramp down the camp; nor could it have happened otherwise but for the dogs, almost as numerous as they, who were able to keep them in check. The Indians killed several, when close upon their tents; but neither the fire of the Indians, nor the noise of the dogs could soon drive them away. Whatever were the terrors which filled the wood, they had no other escape from the terrors of the storm."

The Indians and the Buffalo

The Indians of the Plains were hunters, and the buffalo their chief game, the most stable source of their food supply. The buffalo bands could protect themselves against the gray wolves, but they fell an easy prey to the Red Men. These did not care to hunt them with firearms, strange as it may seem, for the gun-fire stampeded the herd far across the plains. They preferred to stalk the grazing animals on hands and knees, perhaps with wolf-skins thrown over their bodies. Swift and silent, their arrows sped to the vital spots of the "cattle," and an ample store of meat was secured for the camp without driving them too far away. Professor H. Y. Hind, describes the skill with which a single Indian armed with a bow and arrows could cope with a buffalo bull. The scene was witnessed at the east end of Sand Hills Lake, now Eyebrow Lake, at the source of the Qu'Appelle River and

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some thirty odd miles north-west of Moose Jaw. "Dis-mounting at the foot of the bank, he rapidly ascended its steep sides, and just before reaching the top, cautiously approached a large boulder which lay on the brink, and crouched behind it. The buffalo was within forty yards of the spot where the Indian crouched, and slowly approaching the valley as he leisurely cropped the tufts of parched herbage which the sterile soil was capable of supporting. When within twenty yards of the Indian the bull raised his head, snuffed the air, and began to paw the ground. Lying at full length the Indian sent an arrow into the side of his huge antagonist. The bull shook his head and mane, planted his fore feet firmly in front of him, and looked from side to side in search of his unseen foe, who, after driving the arrow, had again crouched behind the boulder. Soon, however, observing the fixed attitude of the bull, a sure sign he was severely wounded, he stepped on one side and showed himself. The bull instantly charged, but when within five yards of his nimble enemy, the Indian sprang lightly behind the boulder, and the bull plunged headlong down the hill, receiving, after he had passed the Indian, a second arrow in his flanks. As soon as he reached the bottom, he fell on his knees, and looked over his shoulder at his wary antagonist, who, however, speedily followed, and observing the bull's helpless condition, sat on the ground within a few yards of him and waited for the death gasp. After one or two efforts to rise, the huge animal dropped his head and gave up the strife. The Indian was at his side without a moment's pause, cut out his tongue, caught his horse,—an excited spectator of the conflict,—and galloping across the valley, handed me the trophy of his success."

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The reader will note that the wary Indian sat down and waited for his victim to die. Inexperienced Europeans were not always so cautious. Duncan M'Gillivray, who in 1794 was travelling to his wintering post, Fort George on the North Saskatchewan north of the present Vermilion, Alberta, tells in his inimitable *Journal* of a rashness on his part which almost cost him his life. He was hunting in the Eagle Hills, south of Battleford. ". . . I crawled up to 2 Bulls and shot one of them through the heart; the other hung over him as if to lament the loss of his companion, and received my shot in the ribs, upon which he advanced a little further and lay down with great composure. I was not unaware of the danger of approaching a wounded Buffalo in a capacity to show his resentment, but I apprehended no danger from him, as he seemed mortally wounded; however, he soon convinced me of my error, by suddenly starting up and springing upon me with the quickness of lightning, and before I had time to fly, caught me betwixt his horns (one of which tore my shirt and Jacket) and tossed me a great height in the air. Tho' I was greatly stunned by the Fall, yet I had recovered myself as soon as possible and discharged my piece at his head, which, with seeing Mr. Shaw running to my assistance, made him scamper away into the woods, where we pursued him and found him dead at a small distance."

A less arduous way of killing buffalo and one bringing a great abundance of meat was the "pound." A band of Indians marked out a sort of bay with bushes into which the hunters were to drive the herd. At the bottom of the bay was an opening, leading (it might be) over the bank of a

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coulee to a natural arena; or it might be to a huge fenced pen into which the buffalo were to be driven and from which they could not escape. The hunters drove the buffalo band into the bay of bushes. At each bush was an Indian waiting to frighten them away from the gap between his bush and the next. Finally, the herd rushed wildly through the opening before them into the pen where the Indians, standing on the banks or on the fence, speared or shot down the bellowing beasts to the last hoof. Let Professor Hind describe the result as seen by him in a pound built by the Crees in the Sand Hills, north-west of Moose Jaw.

"Within a circular fence 120 feet broad, constructed of the trunk of trees, laced with withes together, and braced by outside supports, lay, tossed in every conceivable position, over two hundred dead buffalo. From old bulls to calves of three months old, animals of every age were huddled together in all forced attitudes of violent death. Some lay on their backs with eyes starting from their heads, and tongue thrust out through clotted gore. Others were impaled on the horns of the old and strong bulls. Others again, which had been tossed were lying with broken backs two and three deep. One little calf hung suspended on the horns of a bull which had impaled it in the wild race round and round the pound. The Indians looked upon the dreadful and sickening scene with evident delight, and told how such and such a bull or cow had exhibited feats of wonderful strength in the death-struggle. The flesh of many of the cows had been taken from them and was drying in the sun on stages near the tents. It is needless to say that the odour was overpowering, and millions of large blue flesh flies, humming and buzzing over the

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putrefying bodies, was not the least disgusting part of the spectacle."

The Buffalo Wool Company

The greatest natural resource of the prairies was their vast population of buffalo. From it the Indians derived their food and clothing, the strings with which to make their bows and the materials for various other implements. The vision of the white settlers in Lord Selkirk's colony on the Red River took a wider range, however, than the needs of the stomach. By the early nineteenth century a succession of inventions of steam-driven machinery had increased the power of producing the manufactured article far beyond anything previously imagined and far beyond the current supply of raw materials. The cloth factories were crying out for more wool, and yet more wool. In response to these conditions Australia imported merino sheep and devoted itself to wool raising. Lord Selkirk, anxious to find some commodity which his colony might export, had sent out merino sheep with his first settlers. He probably argued that wool was so light it could easily be carried over the portages, and it was so valuable that a high price would be obtained for the comparatively small bulk which the York boats could carry. Of course it would take a long time to build up a flock of sheep large enough to bring wealth to the colony, especially with the many wolves on the prairies. It was John Pritchard who first pointed out the possibilities which lay in the inexhaustible supply of wool offered by the buffalo herds. The result was the Buffalo Wool Company, John Pritchard general manager, the first western speculation.



Drawn by Lieut. Back, R.N.

J.A. Buffalo Pound

Engraved by Edw. Finden.

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Pritchard saw the whole future of Selkirk's colony and of all the west transformed by his Buffalo Wool Company. He wrote of his wool to Andrew Colvile, Lord Selkirk's executor: "Captain Matthey will bring samples home, some of which, I think, are equal to the finest that have ever visited the London market I will pledge all that is dear to me, if we are properly supported by yourself and the Hudson's Bay Company, that in three years hence the Buffalo Wool Company will have opened to the Hudson's Bay Company a most lucrative and extensive branch of trade, the Colony will be made to flourish beyond your most sanguine expectation, and a share [£20] in the Buffalo Wool Company will be worth one thousand pounds The concern will much benefit the settlement Employment can be found for the winter months for men, women, and children, and next year we will engage to employ what weavers, shoemakers, saddlers, or other mechanics that work with leather or cloth, you may send out, provided they bring out their necessary tools."

For successful business a manufacturer must have vision combined with efficient management, and, what is not less important, a knowledge of the technique of the particular business in hand. Manifestly Pritchard had vision. The demand for wool in the factories of England and the unlimited supply of the material on the plains of the North-West really did hold out the prospect of vast wealth for the Buffalo Wool Company. Pritchard, however, was a child at business. So certain was he of rich returns, when once he got his wool on the London market, that he paid the Indians twice as much for the raw hides with wool on them as the Hudson's Bay Company was paying for the dressed skins, and he paid his

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workmen wages, which only a tried and successful business would have justified. That road, of course, led straight to bankruptcy.

Worse still, Pritchard was ignorant of the technique of his business and assumed that all he had to do was to offer his buffalo wool to the London market, and the English manufacturers would fall over one another in the rush to buy it; but it fetched—as indeed the Australian wool fetched at first—only a low return. Accordingly, Colvile wrote out that success would depend upon weaving the wool in the Colony and selling the cloth to the settlers. What with Pritchard's high cost of production and the poverty of the colonists, there was little or no hope of wealth that way. A rude awakening lay before Pritchard dreaming his golden dream. It was, however, delayed by the frantic efforts of Lady Selkirk to find a place for buffalo wool in the factories of England. She hunted out a manufacturer, James Ogilvie of Edinburgh, who managed to make six shawls out of a consignment of wool sent him. Miss Wedderburn, presumably Lady Selkirk's sister, Lady Hope, and a Mr. Mure, went in to see them. They were not quite satisfied. The cloth was soft but rough, the colour too dark to suit the taste of the day. An attempt was made to find some factory that could spin a finer thread out of the wool. One firm was of opinion that the wool would be best spun on cotton spinning-machines. A Huddersfield firm actually span what appeared to be a successful thread. The costs were enormous. One twelve pound lot of wool cost forty dollars to spin and weave.

There were two technical difficulties in the way of the success of buffalo wool. There are really two types of hair

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on the beast. The long, coarse hairs, six and a half inches long, found mostly on the shoulders, and the fine hair near the skin—the real buffalo wool. The manufacturers at first hired girls to pick the coarse hairs out of the wool; when this proved no success, they set them to pick the long hairs out of the woven shawls, in either case a dreary and expensive task. "The process occupies a girl two days on a shawl." Then too, the colour of the wool was so definite that it could be dyed successfully only as black. The verdict of the manufacturer was "so very tedious and almost unpracticable." One lady's verdict was "soft, but too coarse." One daring merchant in Glasgow bought a single shawl to put on sale, and never returned for another.

The Buffalo Wool Company failed, not simply from Pritchard's thriftless management, but from the technical difficulties which the manufacturer of the wool had to face. Pritchard closed his factory and took down his shingle. The first western speculation had proved a failure.

The Buffalo Hunt

The buffalo of the plains were not the source of a food supply to the Indians alone. They became a very important item in the lives of the white men. They provided the pemmican with which the fur-traders could provision their canoes for the long journey to Lake Superior or to Hudson Bay, so that no time was lost on the way hunting or fishing. The story of the salvation of Lord Selkirk's colony by buffalo meat from the plains, when no other food was to be had, has been too often told to be repeated here. What has been lost sight of, perhaps, is the extent to which the Red River

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Settlement continued to subsist on the meat supply and pemmican procured by the buffalo hunt. After the rivalry of the North-West Company ceased with the Union of 1821, a large number of the officers and men of the two companies were thrown out of employment. Of these a considerable portion, Englishmen, Scotsmen, French-Canadians, and half-breeds of many shades, settled in the colony. Long accustomed to hunt the buffalo, they did not change their ways of living, though they now grew vegetables, raised wheat and barley on their lots, and had some cattle on their farms. In contrast with the Scotsmen from Kildonan, who devoted themselves to agriculture, this side of the Settlement went out joyfully to the buffalo hunt twice a year.

When the day to start came "carts were seen to emerge from every nook and corner of the Settlement, bound for the plains." Fort Garry was visited and the last necessities purchased. The place of assembly was usually Pembina Ridge. In June, 1840, 1,210 carts ascended the Ridge and 1,630 souls were camped on it, awaiting the organization of the hunt. A sort of president was chosen, in this case, Jean-Baptiste Wilkie, an English half-breed brought up in a French home. Ten "captains" were appointed to act as rulers and magistrates. Each captain had ten "soldiers" at his beck and call to act as messengers and police enforcing law and order in the camp. Ten guides were chosen, each to lead the march by day in his turn. The captain of the day with his soldiers directed the camping and controlled the migrant village by night. They saw to it that the carts were drawn up in proper order to make a barricaded camp against a possible attack by the Sioux, and arranged that tents were pitched at

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one end and the animals tethered at the other, all within the barricade. "War-chief" Wilkie saw that all did their duty.

The captains in council with the "war-chief" drew up the rules for the camp. No buffalo were to be "run" on Sunday. No party was to fork off, lag behind, or go before, without permission. None could "run" buffalo before the general order was given. For the first trespass against the laws the offender was to have his saddle and bridle cut up. For the second offence his coat was to be stripped off the offender's back and be cut up. For the third offence the offender was to be flogged. Any person convicted of theft even to the value of a sinew, was to be brought to the middle of the camp, and the crier to call his or her name three times, adding the word "thief" at each time.

In the morning the guide of the day hoisted the flag, and in fifteen minutes the whole camp was on the march. When the buffalo were in sight, the "war-chief" took command of the situation. Let Alexander Ross, who was present at the autumn hunt of 1840, describe the scene. "Our array in the field must have been a grand and imposing one to those who had never seen the like before. No less than 400 hunstmen, all mounted, and anxiously waiting for the word, 'Start!,' took up their position in a line at one end of the camp, while Captain Wilkie, with his spy-glass at his eye, surveyed the buffalo, examined the ground, and issued his orders. At eight o'clock the whole cavalcade broke ground, and made for the buffalo; first at a slow trot, then at a gallop, and lastly at full speed. Their advance was over a dead level, the plain having no hollow or shelter of any kind to conceal their approach. We need not answer any queries as to the feeling

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and anxiety of the camp on such an occasion. When the horsemen started, the cattle might have been a mile and a half ahead; but they had approached to within four or five hundred yards before the bulls curved their tails or pawed the ground. In a moment more the herd took flight, and horse and rider are presently seen bursting in among them; shots are heard, and all is smoke, dust, and hurry. The fattest are first singled out for slaughter; and in less time than we have occupied with the description, a thousand carcasses strew the plain.

"Those who have seen a squadron of horse dash into battle, may imagine the scene, which we have no skill to depict. The earth seemed to tremble when the horses started; but when the animals fled, it was like the shock of an earthquake. The air was darkened; the rapid firing at first, soon became more and more faint, and at last died away in the distance. Two hours, and all was over; but several hours more elapsed before the result was known, or the hunters re-assembled; and who is he so devoid of feeling and curiosity, that could not listen with interest to a detail of the perilous adventure. . . . On this occasion the surface was rocky and full of badger-holes. Twenty-three horses and riders were at one moment all sprawling on the ground; one horse, gored by a bull, was killed on the spot, two more disabled by the fall. One rider broke his shoulder blade; another burst his gun, and lost three of his fingers by the accident; and a third was struck on the knee by an exhausted ball. These accidents will not be thought over numerous, considering the result; for in the evening no less than 1,375 tongues were brought into camp. . .

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"The pursuit is no sooner over than the hunter, with coat off and shirt sleeves tucked up, commences skinning and cutting up the meat; with the knife in one hand, the bridle hanging in the other, and the loaded gun close by, he from time to time casts a watchful look around, to see that no lurking enemy (Sioux) is at hand watching for the opportunity to take a scalp. . . . Then the task of the women begins, who do all the rest; and what with the skins, and meat, and fat, their duty is a most laborious one."

The Mystery of the Disappearance of the Buffalo

In a very short period, about the year 1880, the buffalo suddenly disappeared from the great prairies. The cause of their sudden disappearance is a subject of speculation to this day. Some have suggested an epidemic in the herds, but there is no evidence of any such thing, and surely we should have heard of it. A more probable explanation is that the shaggy denizens of the prairies were exterminated by the hunters. Up to the time of the great buffalo hunt of 1840 there had been a steady increase in the population of the Red River Settlement. This would be accompanied by a parallel increase in the meat procured out on the plains. The proof of this may be found in Alexander Ross's table of the number of carts going out to the hunt in successive years.

In 1820-----	540 carts
In 1825-----	680 "
In 1830-----	820 "
In 1835-----	970 "
In 1840-----	1210 "

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As the supply of pemmican taken by the Hudson's Bay Company did not vary much, the increase must be due to the growth of the population.

From about 1840 traffic between the Red River Settlement and the United States began to be very marked, for the American migration westward was reaching the valley of the Mississippi and centres of trade, such as St. Louis and St. Paul, commenced to afford a market for the furs gathered by the hunters of the Red River Settlement. A principal item in the traffic was buffalo robes. These were no longer left to rot on the prairies, but were brought in to be taken by half-breed traders to the markets of the United States, and doubtless there was an increase in the number of buffalo killed, simply to supply the American world with robes, in a time when sleighs were the universal means of travel in the winter. In 1867 a single consignment of robes sent by the Hudson's Bay Company to New York amounted to seven hundred bales and more. Naturally, it is concluded that the demands of the country for buffalo meat and robes had outstripped the rate of natural increase, and that the herds were being gradually exterminated. But is this an adequate explanation of the *suddenness* of the disappearance of the buffalo?

As has been seen, H. Y. Hind, tells us that there were two great herds, one wintering in the bush country about the Saskatchewan and grazing southward across the upper valley of the River Qu'Appelle, and westward towards the Rockies, while the other wintered about the International Boundary and south of it and grazed northward and east-

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ward to the valley of the Red River. Manifestly, the buffalo hunts of the Red River Settlement would deplete this last, the easterly herd. The drain on the western herd would not be nearly so great. True, the forts and the transportation system of the Hudson's Bay Company made a great demand for pemmican, but nothing equal to the supply. If there was a larger half-breed population, there was a concomitant decrease in the numbers of the Indians. True, there was a very considerable export of buffalo robes from Southern Alberta, but the difficulties of transportation made this nothing like the exportation from the Red River. In 1874 John McDougall saw "great herds" and "dense masses" in the neighbourhood of Calgary. Others speak of "thousands" in that and the following year. One speaks of "countless thousands" in this last year (1875). Yet they were gone in 1881 and the last band, said to have been of no more than six, was shot in 1886 on the Red Deer River of Alberta.

The situation of the western herd in Saskatchewan was essentially the same in the 'seventies. There were then still, to all appearance, plenty of buffalo about Fort Carleton, and half-breeds left Winnipeg, where they were treated brutally by the incoming Canadian population, and where a livelihood gained through the buffalo hunts was no longer theirs, and migrated to form settlements at St. Laurent and Batoche, where they could still hunt buffalo, and live on the herd, and trade meat at the fort. Yet in the early 'eighties the buffalo was gone, and the breeds were starving—suffering to such an extent that, in 1884, they invited Louis Riel in, and in 1885 they broke out in rebellion. These facts raise the question, whether there was not some catastrophe, which depleted

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the western herd to such a degree that it was soon exterminated.

The answer may possibly be found in the terrible winter of 1880, "the big snow winter" as it was called, when blizzard succeeded blizzard, and the railways of the United States were snowed up for a large part of the winter, in spite of every effort to keep them open. The buffalo would take shelter in the hollows and be smothered to death, and probably even they, past masters in "rustling" for their food in the snow, would starve just out of reach of plenty. This conclusion was first suggested to the writer by an "old timer," a settler in the region of Kamsack. He found a great number of buffalo skeletons on his homestead, and the bark of the trees in the poplar bluffs gnawed off. His conclusion was that the band wintering there had been reduced to eating the twigs and bark, and had died of starvation. The herd, depleted by some such disaster, would soon disappear before the guns of the hunters and traders. This point of view has not been thoroughly investigated as yet, but it is worthy of a searching enquiry. At least we know that in 1849 Sir George Simpson reported to the Committee in London an "Extraordinary Mortality in buffalo throughout the Northern plain country owing to the unusual depth of the snow in winter and to the plains having been overrun by fire during the preceding summer in consequence of which prodigious herds starved to death."

CHAPTER II.

The Indians of the Plains

The Crees of the Woods

There were Crees of the Plains, but they were only a branch of the main stock which had been attracted to the prairies by the joys of the buffalo hunt and the consequent abundant food supply, and by the delights of life in the great camps possible upon the plains. The real home of this interesting but elusive people is the shaggy forest of the north, broken by lake and stream. Here the typical scene is a river, or lake, or swamp, bordered by willow, and poplar, and aspen, with the spruces and pines on the dry hill-sides. This was not only the home of the Crees but of the beaver, the moose, and the caribou. The favourite food of the beaver is the roots of reeds in swamps and streams, and the willows, and aspen, and poplar, growing on the banks. Its lodge was in some lake, or some stream dammed up so as not to be frozen to the bottom in winter, but afford a perennial swimming pool, the great necessity in this amphibious creature's life. The favourite food of the moose is the tender buds of the same willow and aspen. Its name is said to signify "the twig-eater." These two animals were the mainstay of the Cree's life, as the buffalo was of the Indian of the Plains. Not only did their flesh provide food, but almost every part of the animal went to supply some daily need or other. The beaver's skin afforded winter robes. The moose's hide, well-dressed, gave summer wear, skins for tents, moccasins, snow-shoes, and what not. Its sinews made strings, and the long hairs of its

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mane afforded material for decoration quite comparable to porcupine quills.

The only trouble was that these animals afforded a very precarious food supply. It was really hard work digging the beaver out and, if a whole family of four were caught, it would make but a small food-supply for an Indian family accustomed to eat about eight pounds of meat per head per day. A single moose might supply a thousand pounds of flesh, but it was a very wary game, hard to find, and harder still to kill, when found. David Thompson tells how expert the Crees were in catching this elusive game, in "tracking" it by its footsteps through the woods, and in "tracing" it by broken twigs and other signs of its presence. "An Indian named Huggemowequan came to hunt for us. . . . He told us he had seen the place a doe moose had been feeding in the beginning of May; in two days more he had unravelled her feeding places to the beginning of September. One evening he remarked to us, that he had been so near to her that he could proceed no nearer, unless it blew a gale of wind, (so that she would not hear his approach). When this took place he set off early, and shot the Moose Deer. This took place in the very early part of October." With meat so difficult to procure, the Wood Crees had to fall back on fishing in spring and autumn. Food was so scarce and so uncertain that they could not live in great camps. They were innocent of tribal life. Theirs was the life of a single family or two living in a wide range of forest, and, as often as not, on the verge of starvation.

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It was Groseilliers and Radisson who first discovered the Crees, and first realized the treasure of furs to be found in their forest home. The Frenchmen were up on Lake Superior in 1658-60 trying to re-establish the fur trade of the St. Lawrence, which had been destroyed by the massacre of the Hurons, the middlemen who brought down the furs to the French at Montreal and Three Rivers. They found that the finest furs came to Sault Ste. Marie, to the middlemen there, from the forest of the north, and that the Crees were the most expert and most careful of all trappers. For example, they never killed the young beaver, but threw them back into the water, assured that they would catch them later when they would afford a more ample meal, and a larger skin with which to make robes. In the summer of 1663 the Frenchmen crossed the forest belt from Lake Superior to James Bay in the company of Crees, and went back to the St. Lawrence with the finest furs ever seen in the stores of the French fur company. This was the beginning of the fur trade of our North-West, which has been marked by a lasting friendship between the Crees and the White Men.

The original home of the Crees was between James Bay and Lake Winnipeg, but, armed with the White Man's gun, they drove the defenceless Chipewyans from the rich fur-field south of the Churchill River; and the Beaver Indians from the River Athabaska until the Peace River and Lesser Slave Lake became the western boundary of the Cree country. They penetrated the forest north of the Saskatchewan far into our Alberta. They trapped the furs of the conquered areas to trade with the English on Hudson Bay or

Fig. 1. *Portrait of a Native American*



A Cree Squaw

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with the French, and later the English from the St. Lawrence. They were the mainstay of the fur trade of the North-West. No tribe of Indians has left its mark on our history as the Crees of the Woods have done. If we have failed to perceive this, it is because there was nothing spectacular in their life, as there was with the tribes of the Plains. Theirs was the monotonous life of a lone family or two dwelling in the depths of the forest. They kept on the friendliest of terms with the White Men, for European guns and iron implements lightened the task of hunting moose, breaking down beaver-dams, and cutting into the beaver "lodges", and thus made their food supply less precarious. The security enjoyed by small groups of traders, sometimes as few as two or three, among the Crees in the forest of the north is little short of marvellous. In all this, life in the Cree country stood in sharp contrast with life on the prairies, where the Indians roamed in great bands.

The Indian Village of the Prairies

The abundant food supply afforded by the buffalo enabled the Indians of the Plains to live in what the fur-traders called villages, but it must be remembered that the Indians moved their camps from place to place in keeping with the wanderings of the "cattle." The skins which made the covering of the tipis, the robes and the few other belongings of a family, would be tied to something like a triangular framework of varying size called a *travois*, one angle resting on the back of a horse or dog, the others dragging on the ground. The women carried the excess baggage, pitched the tents on the new site, and, in fact, did all the

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work, for it was beneath those lords of creation, the men, to do anything but hunt and go on the war-path. La Vérendrye describes for us the picturesque scene of an Assiniboin village on the move. The warriors marched in the form of a screen spread wide on the plains to protect the band from all sides. They scouted in advance, to the right and left, and in the rear. Within their lines the women with their burdens, the old men, and the children, trudged along, driving the dogs. The clatter of the women's tongues and the barking of the dogs was so insufferable that the Frenchmen marched in a body by themselves.

In the summer the villages were out on the plains, in the winter months in the park grass-lands of the north which were the wintering ground of the buffalo. The summer camps would be by some stream or lake for the water's sake; in the winter snow could be melted, more especially as the Indians did not use very much water, and were somewhat lax about washing. Duncan M'Gillivray, in 1794, a clerk in the Saskatchewan Department of the North-West Company, visited a camp of Assiniboin on the Vermillion River, somewhere north of the present Kitscoty or Vermilion, Alberta. His comment runs: "These people are remarkable for a dirty slovenly disposition—paying no regard to decency or cleanliness. On my asking for a drink of water, a young woman presented me with a wooden dish (encrusted with the remainder of many a delicious feast) containing some in which a child had been washed a few moments before, and which was afterwards cooled by a little snow, and the kettle in which the operation had been performed was used soon after to boil meat for our next repast. On arriving at the camp

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our noses were assailed by an offensive smell which would have proved fatal to more delicate organs. It proceeded from the carcasses in the pound and the mangled limbs of buffaloes scattered among the lodges [tipis].” Sometimes the Indians became conscious that the stench of the camp had past the bounds of endurance. When Professor Hind in 1858 was approaching to visit the Crees in the camp by their pound in the Sand Hills, north-west of Moose Jaw and near the Elbow of the South Saskatchewan, he was met by messengers expressing a hope that he would delay his visit until they had moved their camp half-a-mile further west, where the odour of the putrid buffalo would be less annoying.

It is commonplace with historians that an ample food supply, such as, for example, could be produced in the rich and well-watered valley of the Nile, enables people to live in large communities such as the cities of Egypt. Then the necessities of life and the desire for comfort lead the massed population to develop a system of government, law and order, sanitary regulations, and finally literature and art. In a word, life as citizens (the Latin is *cives*) in the city (*civitas*) leads on to all that is summed up in the word civilization. The abundant food supply afforded by the buffalo enabled the Indians of the plains to live in communities of considerable size. If this had not yet led them to apply the first principles of sanitation to their camp, it had, nevertheless, given them a fine community-sense in certain directions. The Indian camp was in many ways a well-regulated institution. It was under a chief, and the warriors appreciated the value of a leader, not only in war but during peace; they cultivated

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its corollary, discipline in the people at large. The policy of the band, whether in war or peace, was settled by solemn councils, in which the chief, and the war-chief, for they were not always the same person, spoke with authority. The chief of the band was the civil officer. He presided at the Councils. After advice taken he decided on the buffalo hunts, on the migrations of the village, and, to some extent, he preserved peace in the camp. In the evening he played the part of our radio, for he would wander through the village announcing the decisions of the Council in a preposterously loud voice, informing the camp of the latest events in the world within their ken; the results of the last brush with the enemy; the presence of the buffalo in such and such a region; and all other interesting news, doubtless including murders and scandals. In fact he was the evening newspaper of that day, sometimes appearing in several editions.

The Indian War-Path

While the ample supply of food enabled the Indians to live in considerable communities and develop social customs, there can be little doubt but that the Indian war-path contributed greatly to such unity and discipline as was to be found among the tribes of the Plains. War has been a great unifying, and, therefore, indirectly a great civilizing force. It has helped to make the family into a clan, and the clan into a nation, and it is doubtful if we should have ever seen the League of Nations but for the sufferings of the last and most devastating of all wars. At all events the Indian war-path made for the unity of the tribe, and inculcated obedience and

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discipline in the, at the very best, untamed nature of the Plain Cree, the Assiniboin, and the Blackfoot.

When the war-path was within sight, the women laboured at preparing the pemmican on which the braves could travel far across the plains to meet the foe, but also the voracious male restrained his appetite to allow the "sinews of war" to accumulate unto the day of departure. The Indian was an individualist and a democrat, but at the sight of war the braves of the tribe assembled in the "soldiers' lodge" to elect a war-chief, and gave an unreserved trust and obedience to him throughout the campaign—a great social achievement among men whose pride was that they were their own masters.

By the way, this practice of choosing a war-chief, who may be other than the ordinary chief of the band, must be appreciated to understand what happened at the Frog Lake Massacre of 1885. The turbulent but wise Big Bear was averse to the killing of the settlers, for he could see clearly that the White Men, with their unlimited supply of gunpowder, would easily overcome the Red Men and half-breeds, who could get their ammunition only from the enemy. The hot-headed young braves of his band forthwith made a "soldiers' lodge" and chose Wandering Spirit for war-chief and it was he and his wild men who perpetrated the massacre. When, therefore, at the trial the Crown undertook to prove Big Bear guilty of treason-felony its case broke down, for all that could be proven against the old chief was that he had consorted with his band after the massacre. The council for the defence pleaded eloquently: "What else could an Indian chief do?" Accordingly, Big Bear was only given

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three years in prison, and, even so, he was released after eighteen months. Yet the misapprehension persists to our day; and the monument unveiled a few years ago on the scene attributes the massacre to "Big Bear and his band"—an injustice surely.

In Indian warfare there was the recognized band of scouts—mostly young men capable of great endurance in pursuit or flight. Behind these there was a screen of watchers who, hidden behind stones or bushes on the hillocks, caught the signals of the scouts, given in accordance with a recognized code. Finally, there was the main body of warriors. Sometimes the arduous duties imposed upon the scouts was too much for nature, at least for untamed Indian nature. It was in a raid of the Crees upon the Blackfeet that a Cree scout had left his pony at the foot of a hill and was crawling up to the crest to get a view of the enemy beyond, when he suddenly came upon a Blackfoot scout asleep on his lonely sentry duty. The Cree could not retreat, for the keen eye of the sentry, when he should awake, would trace his footsteps and bring the enemy down on his band. He dared not shoot, for that would betray his presence. He reached for a large stone and crushed in the head of the delinquent scout, crawled over the crest to view the hostile camp, and beckoned his band to a signal victory.

While the Indian war-path was a serious business undertaken at the hazard of one's life, it was also a favourite sport, enjoyed all the more as the risks were very great. Not the least enjoyable part of it must have been the initiation of the young warriors—the "freshies" so to say—into the army. In some tribes they had to show their power of endurance

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under suffering, it might be by dragging a buffalo's head by a long thong attached to the naked body by skewers driven into the flesh of the back. If the buffalo's head caught on a stump, the pain must have been excruciating, but the would-be brave must endure it without wincing. More sportful were regulations imposed on the young recruits upon their first march. John Tanner says: "The young warrior must constantly paint his face black; must wear a cap or head-dress of some kind; must never precede the old warriors but follow them, stepping in their tracks. He must never scratch his head or any other part of his body, with his fingers, but if he is compelled to scratch, he must use a small stick; the vessel he eats or drinks out of must be touched by no other person. . . . The young warrior, however long or fatiguing the march, must neither eat nor drink, nor sit down by day; if he halts for a moment he must turn his face to his own country, that the Great Spirit may see that it is his wish to return home again."

The Coming of the Horse to the Plains

In the dim and distant past a transformation was wrought on the prairies, in its own way comparable to the change brought about in recent times by the railway and the aeroplane. It was due to the coming of the horse.

Strange to say, the Indians of the North-West have shown but little of that brain-power, by which man overcomes the adverse conditions imposed upon him by the physical features of the world in which he roams. They might have domesticated the caribou, or reindeer as the English fur-traders called it, just as the Laps had done in Northern Europe, and have

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travelled swiftly over the swamps and hummocks of the Barren Lands. They might have taken the buffalo to be their beast of burden, as the first settlers on the Red River did by capturing heifer calves and in time hitching them to their ploughs. The only animal the Red Man of the Plains tamed was the dog. But here it might be claimed that he did not even do that, for it is probable that the dog tamed himself. The easiest way for the wild dog to gain its living was to prowl round on the outskirts of the camps of aboriginal man picking up the scraps; to make friends with him, as it were, to adopt himself into the family. The only beast of burden the Red Man had was the dog, and the only carriage he invented was the "travois." Upon this the savages tied their lighter bundles, leaving the heavier baggage to be carried by the women. Naturally they would not travel fast nor far this way. Even upon the war-path the warriors had to travel on foot. In these circumstances, the few tribes scattered in small bands over our expansive prairies must have seen little of one another in peace or war. Their life must have been little disturbed by alarms of war, and this may, perhaps, explain their lack of the progressive spirit. But when the horse came, space was, so to say, annihilated for them. Whether to the buffalo hunt or on the war-path they could ride far across our open plains. The several bands of the tribe could meet as one, and whole tribes go off to war with their neighbours. This goes far to explain the keen sense of tribal unity shown by our prairie Indians—especially by the Blackfoot tribes—and their more highly developed social organization.

It was the Spaniards that introduced the horse to the natives of the American continent. Much of the ease with

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which they conquered Mexico was due to the terror struck into the natives by the sight of a strange creature, half man, half a four-footed beast. Only when an unlucky white warrior was thrown from his horse were the Mexicans undeceived. Only then did they perceive that they were fighting with no more than mounted men. Spanish horses thrived on the plains of Mexico and were, from time to time, stolen by the Indians of the Prairies west of the Mississippi, and so passed northward. Some time about the beginning of the second quarter of the eighteenth century a few steeds were the happy possession of the Snakes, who roamed between the Missouri and the South Saskatchewan. When La Vérendrye was on the Red River in 1736 there were no horses there, but he knew they could be had by "the River of the West," our Missouri. The first horses to be seen in the region we know as Manitoba were a couple brought back from the Missouri by the sons of the great French fur-trader and commandant.

The first time horses were seen on the South Saskatchewan was about 1730. In 1787 an old chief told the lad David Thompson, later surveyor to the Hudson's Bay Company, that they first came when he was a young man, say twenty-two years old. When his band heard of them they could not make out what they were. They apparently heard that the Snakes, the happy possessors of the strange beasts, harnessed them to large "travois" and were able to journey fast and far with their heavy baggage. "At last as the leaves were falling, we heard that one was killed by an arrow shot into his belly, but the Snake Indians that rode him got away; numbers of us went to see him, and we all admired him. He put us in mind of a stag without horns; and we did not

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know what name to give him. But as he was a slave to Man, like the dog, which carried our things, he was named the Big Dog (Misstutim)".

The Sport of Horse Stealing

The Indians of the Plains took part in war and in horse stealing as so many forms of sport rather than in grim earnest. The Snakes, mounted on their horses, were pushing into the valley of the South Saskatchewan carrying all before them, for the Blackfoot infantry could not withstand their cavalry charge. It is true that the Blackfoot tribes stayed their progress by calling in Crees and Assiniboin from the plains about the Touchwood Hills, armed with guns, and thus were able to defeat the foe. Nevertheless, it was a matter of grim necessity for the tribes of our prairies to secure horses, and so be more than able to hold their own on the battlefield. The first horses were captured from an encampment of Snakes stricken with small-pox and unable to defend themselves or save their animals. Subsequently, the war with the Snakes took on the form of horse stealing. The old Piegan war-chief Saukamappee told David Thompson of the first raid of his tribe on the horses of the Snakes. It took place when he was a young man in the 1730's. He and his braves watched a large camp of the enemy for many days till their own provisions were nearly exhausted, but they waited on for their opportunity. "We were getting tired, and our solace was of an evening to look at the horses and mules. At length the Chief said to us to get ready, and pointing to the top of the Mountains, [said] see the blue sky is gone and a heavy storm is there, which will soon reach us; and so it did. About sunset

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we proceeded thro' the wood, to the horses, and with the lines we carried, each helping the other, we soon had a horse or a mule to ride on. We wanted to drive some with us, but the Chief would not allow it; it was yet daylight when we left the wood, and entered the plains, but the Storm of Wind was very strong and on our backs, and at the gallop, or trot, so as not to tire our horses, we continued to midnight, when we came to a brook, with plenty of grass, and let them get a good feed. After which we held on to sun rising, when seeing a fine low ground, we staid the rest of the day, keeping watch until night, when we continued our journey. The storm lasted two days and greatly helped us." They captured about thirty-five horses, and it must have been great sport.

By the time the victorious Piegans and their allies, the Blackfeet, had driven the Snakes out of the valley of the South Saskatchewan and occupied their later positions west of Calgary, and towards Edmonton, respectively, they were well supplied with horses. The tribes to their east, the Assiniboin and Plain Crees, occupying the North Saskatchewan from the mouth of the Vermilion River eastward, now became the horse-thieves at the expense of the Blackfoot tribes. In time the Assiniboin became the most expert of all tribes at stealing; they proved the plague of the fur-traders. As they were by that time tolerably well supplied with horses and as there was little or no market for the beasts, it must be inferred that they engaged in the subtle art of horse stealing simply for the sport of the thing, a sport greatly enhanced by the risks involved in it. David Thompson reports a horse stealing raid at Rocky Mountain House in

From oil painting by Roper

Indian Environment



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1802 by six Assiniboins. "When within a few miles of the house they came to about fifty horses guarded by three men whose station was on a low bank that overlooked the place where the horses were feeding. All the mares had, as usual, the fore [feet] tied together with a leather thong to prevent them strolling about, and more readily kept together. The Men kept strict watch, only one man slept at a time and in the night two of them walked among the horses well armed. Thus for six days they [the Assiniboins] watched for an opportunity, during which time, with their Arrows they had killed three buck Antelopes. They now tired of waiting and were determined to try their fortune. In the afternoon, when they perceived the Men had dined, three of them with the skins of the Antelopes and their horns, disguised themselves to appear like deer, the other three also put horns on their heads of which there were very plenty on the plains; the latter went behind the horses and there entered among them and untied the feet of the horses; those with the Antelope skins pretended to feed as deer, and got among the horses for the same purpose. The Men were deceived, but remarked it was the first time they had seen Antelopes feeding among horses. As soon as the horses were all untied, the Indians gave a signal to each other, with the lines bridled the best horses, and jumping on them as they were, horns and all, gave the hunting halloa, and drove the whole of the horses off at a round gallop. The Men were so surprised that they could scarcely believe what they saw, and before they could recover themselves to use their guns, the whole of the horses were far out of shot." This raid must have been rare sport.

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The Coming of the White Man's Gun to the Saskatchewan.

About 1730 the White Man's horse had been brought to our prairies and was changing the whole face of things. The Snakes, whose range was about the upper Missouri, the first happy possessors of this instrument of revolution, had begun to ride when on the war-path. They could strike far afield and swiftly. None of the other Indian tribes fighting on foot, could withstand them. Forthwith, the Snakes began to enlarge their borders, to occupy the valley of the South Saskatchewan, and to drive back the Blackfoot tribes which were pushing down south-westwards from the Battleford region into those very parts. In the clashes the Piegan infantry could not stand up against the charge of the Snake cavalry. The old chief said to David Thompson, the geographer of the North-West: "The Snake Indians and their allies had Misstutim [Big Dogs, that is horses] on which they rode, swift as Deer, on which they dashed at the Piegans, and with their Pukamoggan [tomahawks] knocked them on the head, and they had thus lost several of their best men." Until the Blackfeet could find some remedy, their country lay at the feet of the *enemy*, for that is the significance of the name Snake. To meet this grave crisis they called in the White Man's gun.

That deadly weapon, the gun, had long since revolutionized European warfare and played its part in destroying Feudalism. It had come to James Bay with Groseilliers and the founders of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1668. It was to be bought at the mouth of the River Nelson in 1682, but

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it doubtless took time to reach the prairies. Still it was known and its deadly work appreciated, at any rate, by report. At this hour of crisis there were Crees and Assiniboins east of the South Saskatchewan, the proud possessors of this instrument of death. The Piegans sent for them to stay the onslaught of the Snakes. Three Crees and seven Assiniboins carrying in all ten guns and thirty balls, (i.e. three rounds each) came to the rescue. The battle took place on "a wide plain," probably west of the Eagle Hills. Let Thompson's Indian chief tell the rest of the story:—

"When we came to meet each other . . . each displayed their numbers, weapons, shields, in all which they were superior to us, [on this occasion the Snakes had no horses] except our guns which were not shown, but kept in leathern cases and if we had shown them, they would have taken them for long clubs At length . . . they formed their long usual line by placing their shields on the ground to touch each other We sat down opposite to them and most of us waited for the night to make a hasty retreat, (so outnumbering was the enemy). The War-chief was close to us, anxious to see the effect of our guns. The lines were too far asunder for us to make a sure shot, and we requested him to close the line to about sixty yards, which was gradually done, and lying flat on the ground behind the shields, we watched our opportunity when they drew their bows to shoot at us. Their bodies were then exposed and each of us, as opportunity offered, fired with deadly aim, and either killed or severely wounded everyone aimed at.

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"The War-chief was highly pleased, and the Snake Indians finding so many killed and wounded kept themselves behind their shields; the War-chief then desired we would spread ourselves by twos through the line, which we did, and our shots caused consternation and dismay along the whole line. The battle had begun about Noon, and the sun was not yet half down when we perceived some of them had crawled away from their shields and were taking to flight. (The War-chief now told his men to be ready for his signal to charge). This he gave by himself stepping in front with his spear and calling on them to follow him as he rushed on their line, and in an instant the whole of us followed him; the greater part of the enemy took to flight, but some fought bravely, and we lost more than ten killed and many wounded. . . . At the body of every Snake Indian killed [presumably those killed by gunshot] there were five or six trying to get his scalp. . . . As there were only three of us [Crees] and seven of our friends, the Stone Indians, we did not interfere and got nothing."

Next day the victory was being celebrated and scalps displayed. The gunners stood without any scalps, the symbols of prowess in battle and the offering of the living warriors to their dead friends. But the War-chief decided that they should have the scalps of those whom they had killed and should have the honour of a special paint for their faces—their foreheads and eyes black, their faces red ochre—for it was really they who had won the battle.

The Snakes were driven out of the upper valley of the South Saskatchewan and the Pieguns occupied the territory.

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Here the fur-traders found them when they came half a century later.

The Coming of Small-Pox

The White Man's horse and his gun reached the Indians of the prairies long before the Europeans, always excepting Henry Kelsey, appeared upon the scene, and each, in its own way, wrought a revolution. Then came the White Man's small-pox, bringing about even more drastic changes. The small-pox appears to have come from the French on the St. Lawrence, and to have devastated the Indian tribes about Lake Michigan, who traded with the Frenchmen at Michilimackinac at the entrance to that Lake. From these it must have passed to the Sioux in the valley of the Mississippi, and from them to the Snakes on the Missouri, at that time pushing their way into the valley of the South Saskatchewan, then called the Bow River. Thus it reached the Piegiens, who were contesting the possession of that great river with the Snakes. Not long after the Piegiens, assisted by the guns of three Crees and seven Assiniboiens, won their great victory over the Snakes, one of their scouting parties reported a considerable camp of the enemy, and something very suspicious about it. It was too large a camp for the Piegiens present to attack. They contented themselves with keeping it under observation. From a high knoll they kept watch. The suspicious thing about it was that none went out to hunt; the enemy's horses grazed peacefully outside the camp, and none came to tend them; a herd of buffalo was pasturing quietly about the tipis, unmolested. What did it all mean?

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The Piegans argued that it was all a ruse to tempt them to attack, so that some other camp of Snakes could come upon them suddenly in the height of battle and deal a disastrous blow. Scouts were sent out. They returned to report that there was no other camp in the vicinity. This gave the small band of Piegans the courage to try an assault. Let the old Piegan chief, who was informing David Thompson of the happenings of his early manhood tell the story: "Our Scouts had been going too much about their camp and were seen; they expected what would follow, and all those that could walk, as soon as night came on, went away. Next morning at the dawn of day, we attacked the Tents, and with our sharp flat daggers and knives, cut through the tents and entered for the fight; but our war whoop instantly stopped, our eyes were appalled with terror; there was no one to fight with the dead and the dying, each a mass of corruption. We did not touch them, but left the tents, and held a council on what was to be done. We all thought the Bad Spirit had made himself master of the camp and destroyed them. It was agreed to take some of the best of the tents, and any other plunder that was clean and good, which we did, and also took away the few Horses they had, and returned to our camp.

"The second day after this dreadful disease broke out in our camp, and spread from one tent to another as if the Bad Spirit carried it. We had no belief that one Man could give it to another, any more than a wounded Man could give his wound to another. We did not suffer so much as those that were near the river, into which they rushed and died. We had only a little brook, and one third of us died

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but in some of the other camps there were tents in which every one died. When at length it left us, and we moved about to find our people, it was no longer with the song and the dance; but with tears, shrieks, and howlings of despair for those who would never return to us. War was no longer thought of, and we had enough to do to hunt and make provision for our families, for in our sickness we had consumed all our dried provisions; but the Bisons and Red Deer were also gone; we did not see one half of what was before; whither they had gone, we could not tell; we believed the Good Spirit had forsaken us, and allowed the Bad Spirit to become our Master. What little we could spare we offered to the Bad Spirit to let us alone and go to our enemies. To the Good Spirit we offered feathers, branches of trees, and sweet smelling grass. Our hearts were low and dejected, and we shall never be again the same people. To hunt for our families was our sole occupation and kill Beavers, Wolves and Foxes to trade our necessities; and we thought of War no more, and perhaps would have made peace with them, for they had suffered dreadfully as well as us and had left all this fine country of the Bow River to us".

The old chief was right. Things were never the same again. The scourge must have carried away one-third, if not the half, of the Indians of the Plains. When, finally, the white traders came, they found a less numerous, and, therefore, a less formidable world of savages facing them. The horses were there to assist them in their journeys. Guns to protect them, the Europeans bore in their hands. But it must have been no mean factor in smoothing their way, that the White Man's fell disease had left the land comparatively dispeopled.

CHAPTER III

English and French on Hudson Bay

Groseilliers and Radisson

The influence of the Europeans was felt by the Indians under western skies in the shape of their horses, their guns, and their small-pox before they appeared in person. The White Men themselves came westward very slowly, and then only in pursuit of the wealth of furs to be found in the great forest of the north which extends from Labrador to the Rocky Mountains.

For wellnigh three generations English and French were in sharp rivalry for the fur trade of this forest, which separated the English settlements on Hudson Bay from the French colony on the St. Lawrence. The Indians might take their furs northward downstream by rivers like the Rupert, the Moose and its tributaries, and the Albany, to the Englishmen posted near the shores of James Bay; or southward by the Saguenay and its upper waters to the Frenchman at Tadousac on the St. Lawrence, or by the St. Maurice to Three Rivers, or again, by the Ottawa to Lachine and Montreal. Later the rivalry was farther west in the basin of Lake Winnipeg and on the Saskatchewan, from which the savages might take their peltries northward by the Nelson or the Hayes to York Fort on the latter river, or trade them with Frenchmen quartered among them, to be taken by Winnipeg River and the water-way, which is now the International Boundary between Canada and the United States, to Lake Superior and so to Montreal.

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Here the rivalry between English and French may be looked on as a competition between commercial routes for the export of the products of the North-West, namely between the Hudson Bay route and the Montreal route, each leading to the markets of Europe. This rivalry of routes continued after the English conquered Canada, and is, to some extent, with us today with the opening up of Churchill Fort as the port of the North-West.

The rivalry of the English with the French began in Hudson Bay itself. Later, in the time of La Vérendrye, when the French had surrendered Hudson Bay, its centre was in the fur forest of the north. Curiously enough, it was two Frenchmen, Groseilliers and Radisson, who brought the English in and precipitated the economic conflict. In the public mind Radisson is the greater of the two, but careful scrutiny leads to the conclusion that this is because Radisson wrote about himself, while Groseilliers never handled the pen.

If the reader has been connected with some important movement, even though it be in a distant way, and wishes to be remembered let him write a book about himself; picture himself as in the limelight, and splash in the colour well. All others will be forgotten, while he will be remembered in the coming centuries. The men who initiated the movement, but were too indifferent to tell their own tale, and so never got a "good press," will pass into the background. After-generations will know little or nothing about them. Because of his book, historians will identify the writer with great achievements and proclaim him, possibly, as a great man of his time. So, at least, it has proved with Groseilliers and Radisson. Groseilliers was the master-mind of the two, but

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Radisson, his associate, wrote the story of their doings, and he took great care to put himself in the front of the stage. Four of the narratives of his journeys, written in a Frenchman's broken English, were for English readers, who had no means of checking his facts. He exaggerated. He did worse. He attributed the dramatic experiences of others to himself. For example, he tells the story of a struggle with the Iroquois on the Ottawa in which a Jesuit priest was killed, as if he was of the party, and he pictures himself and Groseilliers as cleverly giving the savages the slip and getting by into the Upper Country, when in truth Radisson at this time, if not in France, was no nearer than Acadia. The result is that this clever self-advertiser stands out today as the prototype of that adventure-loving class of French-Canadians, the *coureurs-des-bois*, the subject of much fulsome praise from the pen of many writers.

Groseilliers and Radisson are remembered, in the first place, because they appeared in the part of saviours in a time of disaster, when the destruction of the Huron nation by the Iroquois in 1650 had brought New France to the verge of bankruptcy. The Hurons had been the middlemen, who brought down the furs of the West and North-West by the Ottawa route to Montreal. When the remnant of this proud people fled in panic to the far shores of Lake Michigan, few were found daring enough to face the Iroquois, who were lurking about the Ottawa to carry off the furs to the Dutch mart at Albany on the River Hudson. Now the fur trade was the life-blood of the French colony. Some one must be sent up-country to give courage to the fugitives to come down with their furs and save New France from disaster.

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Groseilliers was one of the two men chosen for this dangerous task. He had been in the service of the Huron Mission on Georgian Bay, bringing up its annual supplies from Quebec. He was familiar with the Ottawa-Lake Nipissing canoe-route, knew how to travel through a wilderness, and, when food was wanting, provide for himself as he went. He knew the Huron tongue and almost certainly the Cree, and he must have been past-master of the subtle art of managing the Indians. He brought down a fine flotilla of fur-laden canoes with him and caused the whole colony to rejoice (1656).

In the knowledge of the Indians and in the experience of Indian life Radisson was in no way second to Groseilliers, but he had learned Indian ways in the south, during his captivity among the Iroquois. He loved the Iroquois ways and used even to go on the war-path with his adopted family as an Iroquois brave. He says: "Friends, I loved those people well." This made him a fit mate to Groseilliers, but he was unfamiliar with the region of the Great Lakes, and unacquainted with their peoples, and at this stage was probably ignorant of the Algonquin tongue. When he escaped from the Iroquois and returned by way of New Amsterdam (New York), Holland and France, to his home at Three Rivers, in the year of Groseilliers' return, he found that adventuresome voyageur married to his sister. Hence it came about, that, when Groseilliers was going up again to encourage the Hurons, the Ottawas, and the Saulteurs, the people about the Sault Ste Marie, to bring their furs down more steadily to Montreal, he regarded Radisson as a fit mate to him for the enterprise (1658-1660), but we must attribute the result of the journey to Groseilliers, the old friend of the Indians.

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He brought them down in great squadrons of canoes and rehabilitated the fur trade of New France.

Further, we must ascribe it to Groseilliers' knowledge of the peoples of Lake Superior, that he first learned of the forest belt of the North-West, of its great wealth of beaver of the finest sort, and that the Crees were the greatest trappers in North America. The plan to penetrate into this forest belt and to cross to "the Bay of the North", James Bay, must be attributed to him. When he and Radisson went off, in the face of the Governor's refusal to give them a license, and were severely fined, it was Groseilliers who went over to France to plead for justice. The plan to open a direct trade in the furs of the North-West by Hudson Strait was first mooted by him when he was in France. When the scheme was defeated and the two men were debating what to do next, Radisson himself tells us, it was Groseilliers that suggested going to the English in New England. There they met Major George Cartwright, who was in New England on a commission for Charles II., and he took them over to England. He introduced them and their plan of trade through Hudson Strait to Sir George Carteret and to others who held office in the Court and in the Government. Sir George brought them to no less a person than His Majesty King Charles. In 1668 a first venture to Hudson Bay through the strait of that name was made, the King lending the *Eaglet*, one of the ships of the Royal Navy, for the expedition. Radisson sailed in her, and Groseilliers in the ketch *Nonsuch*. The *Eaglet* was dismasted and returned to England with Radisson, but Groseilliers led the Englishmen in the *Nonsuch* to Rupert River on James Bay. They returned the next

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summer with a cargo of furs that promised wealth for all the adventurers. The result was the formation of the Hudson's Bay Company, May 2, 1670. The credit of it all must go to Groseilliers. He was the master-builder, the silent man of action. Radisson was, so to say, in the publicity department of the partnership, and has persuaded subsequent generations that he was principal partner.

The Hudson's Bay Company - a Colonization Scheme

"The Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay" were incorporated by a Charter under the Great Seal granted by Charles II, May 2, 1670. The Company is with us still, made visible to us in the West by noble stores in our principal cities, but in the 265 years and more of its existence it has had many parts to play besides that of a trading corporation. At the outset it was a great national enterprise. When the first expedition sailed to Hudson's Bay in 1668, under the guidance of Groseilliers and Radisson, one of their ships, the *Eaglet*, as has been said before, had been transferred for the purpose from the Royal Navy by command of the King. While the trade in furs promised by the Frenchmen was the immediate and tangible reward offered by the expedition, hopes were bright for a more distant but even greater return to the stockholders and to England than any fur trade could offer. Although the voyages of Henry Hudson, Thomas Button, and the rest of them, had appeared to dispel the belief that a North-West Passage would be found to the rich marts of China, the hope that it would yet be discovered lingered on like glowing coals in a bed of ashes. Radisson, who had no more respect for the truth than the average

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company promoter, threw on the dying fire the well-chosen faggots that brought back a quick and cheering blaze. He told the believing Englishmen that they could pass up a great river to the Great Lakes and thence sail westward by another great stream (presumably the Mississippi) into a strait opening out into the Pacific. The Charter, therefore, gave to the Adventurers not simply a monopoly of trade, but it envisaged the foundation of a colony on either side of the route to China, running south-westward across America into the delectable regions of the Pacific. It provided not only a form of government for the Company but forms of administration for the colony, Rupert's Land as it was called. The Hudson's Bay Company, then, was a national enterprise, whose more distant object was the establishment of a colony overseas, which would give Englishmen the monopoly of the new way to the thriving markets of the Far East. It is only because this great objective proved impossible of attainment, that we have settled down to the conception that the Company has been no more than a fur-trading corporation.

So grandiose was the scheme launched under the influence of the reckless eloquence of Groseilliers and Radisson, that all the great men of the land, and particularly those interested in overseas colonization, rushed in to have a share in its glory and its profits. The first Governor was Prince Rupert, the King's cousin, the dashing cavalry officer of the Civil War. Scarcely less conspicuous among the subscribers to the voyage of the *Nonsuch* in 1668 was the Duke of Albermarle, better known as George Monck, who had marched his

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troops from Scotland, had overthrown the Commonwealth and placed Charles II. on the throne. George, the first Duke of Albermarle, died in January 1670, and the Company received its charter on May 2nd, following. His son Philip, second Duke of Albermarle, inherited his wealth and his position among the promoters of the Company. Of the charter members Lord Arlington and Lord Ashley were at the time the members of that inner cabinet of five, called the "Cabal" from the first initials of their names. Ashley was much the ablest of this group which held the destinies of England for the time in its hand. Sir Robert Vynor, Baronet, was soon after made Lord Mayor of London. Sir Peter Colleton was one of the most prominent planters in the then thriving colony of Barbados and had been a leading figure in the settlement of Carolina. Moreover, he was a member of the Council for Foreign Plantations, a committee of the Privy Council which functioned in those days as our Colonial Office does today. Sir George Carteret, who brought Groseilliers and Radisson to Charles II, was the founder of the Colony of New Jersey and, no doubt, he regarded the Company, which he was instrumental in organizing, as but another great English colonial enterprise. When the Charter was granted, his son, Sir Philip, held his stock. The business of equipping the ships and selling the furs was relegated to lesser but wealthy men like Sir James Hayes and Sir John Portman. Had a way to China been found through a country adapted by its climate and its water-ways for settlement and had a great colony arisen, the stockholders, who were statesmen and experienced in administration and colonization according to the methods of that day, would, doubtless, have

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stepped to the front to guide its destiny. As it proved, Radisson's picture of the North-West Passage and its rich harvests was as insubstantial as the dreams of many another company promoter. The fur trade was the one tangible result of the adventure, a rich enough discovery in itself. The Colony functioned in the early days only as a few trading-posts on the shores of what critics, even in the early days, called a frozen sea. The situation was, of course, changed when the Company built posts inland, and Lork Selkirk established his colony on the Red River.

For the establishment of the Company's Colony, the Charter granted to the Hudson's Bay Company "all those seas, straits [this would include any strait leading through to the Pacific], bays, rivers, lakes, creeks and sounds, in what so-ever latitude they shall be, that lie within the entrance of the straits, commonly called Hudson's Straits", together with all the lands and territories upon them, provided they were not already in the possession of English subjects or a Christian prince. To these were added the fisheries and minerals, all the natural resources, in fact. Finally, it was decreed that "the said land shall be from henceforth reckoned and reputed as one of our plantations or colonies in America called Rupert's Land." The extent of the land granted to the Company was unknown at the time. The Charter, therefore, took the form of a blank cheque, the figure to be filled in as the country became known. As it proved, the region placed in the hands of the Company included the area drained by the rivers flowing into Hudson Bay, that is the northern portions of the present provinces of Quebec and Ontario, the whole of the provinces of Manitoba and

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Saskatchewan and the major part of Alberta—a princely domain, surely.

The Hudson's Bay Company Upholds the Flag

The Company had been formed to develop the trade in furs through Hudson Strait, but it had, in the less immediate future, the prospect of establishing an English colony on the northern route to the profitable trade of China. It must soon have appeared to them that Radisson's account of such a route was no more than the glow on the horizon, which every company promoter paints in to make his schemes acceptable to the public. Their first post, Charles Fort, was established at the mouth of Rupert River, on James Bay. Their Governor Bayly, apparently always accompanied by Groseilliers as interpreter, explored the shores of Hudson Bay westward as far as the mouth of the Nelson, pushing into the successive rivers, including the Moose and Albany, to examine their resources in furs, and, we may infer, asking if they offered the route to the great lakes, which Radisson had said was a stage on the way to the Pacific. On this quest the Nelson was visited in 1672, and in 1680 after Bayly was recalled. Long before this last date the stockholders must have lost their faith in Radisson's story and resigned themselves to play the part of a simple fur-trading company with a diminutive colony, consisting of a few fur forts on their hands, but with a lucrative trade in furs. Nevertheless, they inaugurated the system of administration for their settlements sketched by the Charter, viz. a Governor calling his chief subordinates to council when occasion required. There exists in the Hudson's Bay Company's Archives a Council Book of

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York Fort, recording the minutes of the Council at that post in the time of Governors James Knight and Henry Kelsey.

At home in London, the government installed by the Charter in 1670 functioned steadily, and functions to this day. Prince Rupert, the King's cousin, as Governor, presided over the general meeting of the stockholders—the "General Court" which outlined the policy of the Company. "The Committee" met under the chairmanship of Sir James Hayes, the Deputy-Governor, and managed the current business, equipping the ships and arranging for the two annual sales of furs. In the minutes of the Committee we find Radisson now out at the posts on the Bay, now sorting furs in the warehouse in London, surely a dull business for such a wild spirit. We also see an oak chest installed in the Secretary's office for the preservation of the precious Charter. It had a large and two small locks, whose keys were kept by the Deputy-Governor and two members of the Committee. The precious document was only brought out on the motion of the Committee. The occasion for doing so came when some interloper, who had infringed the monopoly, was to be prosecuted in the courts, or, for example, when the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal was to assure himself that the monopoly was valid, before issuing a Royal Proclamation warning intruders away from Hudson Bay.

While the Company thus played the simple part of a fur-trading organization, the whole situation forced it into the major role of the representative of England and England's rights on our northern waters. Slowly the antagonism of England and France on the Bay developed. The French regarded the English Company as intruding on their rights,

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although they could plead no early French expedition to the Bay either by land or water. Against this, the English could assert that Henry Hudson, Thomas Button, Luke Foxe, and Thomas James had discovered and explored Hudson Bay; that Button had formally claimed Port Nelson for them in the name of the King, and James the region of the Bay named after him; that Charles Bayly, first Governor of Rupert's Land, had purchased the regions of Rupert River, of the Moose and the Albany by treaty with the Indians; and, finally, that the Company had effected settlements on these rivers not yet seen by French eyes.

The Company was very careful to give their venture all the appearances of a national enterprise. Though it owed its existence to a very large extent to Groseilliers and Radisson, these Frenchmen were studiously kept out of every commanding position in the service. They held no higher office than that of interpreters. However, the obligation of the Company towards them was recognized in the salaries which they received—twice as large as that of Governor Bayly himself. Nevertheless, the dubious position of the Frenchmen would naturally wound their pride. Moreover, disagreements arose.

In the end the French Government won Groseilliers and Radisson back to its service, in spite of the fact that Radisson had married the daughter of Sir John Kirke, a stockholder in the Hudson's Bay Company. Apparently, the French were at first reluctant to send him on a rival expedition to Hudson Bay, for King Charles II of England and Louis XIV of France were in close alliance. Radisson was placed in the French Navy. The writer, who was born in Trinidad of the British

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West Indies, always smiles when he thinks of Radisson, the hero of the Arctic Hudson Bay, sailing the tropical seas within sight of his (the writer's) native island and playing a part in the capture of Tobago from the English. There was no war on, but such enterprises against the colonies of a friendly power were not uncommon in those days. The French Governor of Canada now felt free to undertake a similar enterprise against the English on Hudson Bay. Radisson visited his wife in London and learned that the Hudson's Bay Company was to organize an expedition to make a settlement on the estuary of Nelson River, Port Nelson as it was called. It was believed, (as it proved, correctly), that the country drained by that river was extraordinarily rich in furs of the first quality.

In 1682 no less than three parties sailed for Port Nelson— young Benjamin Gillam, an interloper from the English colony at Boston; Groseilliers and Radisson at the head of a French expedition from Quebec; and Governor Bridgar in command of the Hudson's Bay Company's party from London. The French expedition arrived after Benjamin Gillam, but before Bridgar. When Radisson met Bridgar the day after his arrival, each asserted the claims of his country against the other. This land belongs to the King of France, said Radisson. No, it does not, said Bridgar pointing across the river to the spot where Button had wintered, and where he had erected the arms of the King of England; it belongs to England.

Radisson wrote a very highly coloured narrative in French for a French public, showing how he lorded it over

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the Englishmen, who were settled on Nelson River, while his post was on the Hayes. He seems to chuckle as he tells of the ruse by which he took Benjamin Gillam prisoner, and possessed himself of his ship and fort and goods. He does not say that he was able to do so by entering into an agree-by which they were to assist one another in the trade. It was while on a friendly visit to the French fort that Gillam was seized. Then, too, Radisson asserts that he fed the English of Bridgar's post in their necessity, and leads the reader to understand that they did no trade at all, but the minutes of the Company's Committee show that Bridgar sent home a considerable consignment of furs. Radisson did not dare capture the English post till its ship had sailed away with the peltries, and when but a few servants were left in the fort for the summer's trade.

To this daring act of violence, the Hudson's Bay Company replied by inducing King Charles to bring pressure to bear on the French Court through his ambassador. The demand was that Radisson, who was now in Paris, should be hanged as a pirate. The difficulty was straightened out and the friendship of the two countries maintained by Radisson going back to the English, with orders to go to Port Nelson and compensate the Company by handing over to it the furs and goods in the French Fort on Hayes River, which was in the charge of Chouart, the son of Groseilliers. Radisson sailed to Port Nelson in a ship with the appropriate name of the *Happy Return*.

This was only the beginning of the long struggle between the English and the French for the fur trade of Hudson Bay,

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the Hudson's Bay Company, representing the claims of England and bearing the brunt of the struggle.

New Light on Iberville

There is no intention to tell here the story of the long struggle of the English and French for Hudson Bay, but fresh light can be thrown on some of its phases. Take, for example, the capture of the Hudson's Bay Company's forts on James Bay by the Chevalier de Troyes and Pierre Lemoyne d'Iberville in 1686. It is usually written up in the heroics of that day, and Iberville is pictured at Moose Fort as getting into one of the buildings, his sword in one hand and his gun in the other; the door is slammed behind him, but he slashes right and left with his sword and holds his own against the massed Englishmen until relief comes, when his followers smash in the door and gather behind him. The English are cowed and finally surrender. No one would dream of suggesting that Iberville was not a man of extraordinary courage, and a commander of astonishing resourcefulness. The course of the French striking force of a hundred men, leaving Lachine in the melting snow of spring, passing up the Ottawa River in their canoes when it was in flood, crossing the height of land to Lake Abitibi, and descending the Abitibi and reaching Moose Fort in sight of Hudson Bay in June, is a marvel of endurance. De Troyes and Iberville knew the value of surprise in warfare and must have great credit for effecting it. The people at Moose Fort were in bed when a sudden volley announced the attack of the French. At Charles Fort, on Rupert River, they were in bed, with a ladder leaning against the palisade on the outside, by which the French effected



Ford & West Lith.

MOOSE FACTORY—1854

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their entry to the fort. The first intimation of a French attack came to the factor, Mr. Verner, with the explosion of a bomb thrown down the chimney into the stove in his bedroom. On the sloop *Craven*, anchored in the river, they were all asleep, even the watchman on deck. No wonder if the Englishmen, attacked in their bunks by trained soldiers, concluded that there was nothing to do but surrender.

Now look at the situation from the Englishmen's point of view. The whole region was wrapped in profound peace. Relations with the Indians were the happiest, and no hostile movement by them was to be expected. There was no war between England and France. On the contrary, a close friendship existed between the two Crowns. There was no declaration of war, not even on the part of Chevalier de Troyes and Iberville, though a French fur-trader had written letters to Verner at Charles Fort and Governor Sargeant at Albany, suggesting to them that it would be well for them to abandon their forts. The letters were taken as a joke. At Moose Fort, on the day before the French midnight attack, the Governor, John Bridgar, left with five of his principal men in the sloop *Craven* for a visit to Charles Fort. This means that about a third of the men were away from the fort. Probably little more than a dozen men were left, and these labourers, picked up in the market in London, and not an officer to lead the defence. A dozen men, without military training and presumably in their night-shirts, faced thirty regulars and seventy-five volunteers, all drilled from time to time on the march north. In almost every case in the struggle between English and French on the Bay, when a trained force, French or English, attacked a group of mere fur-traders, English or French, in their fort, the traders surrendered.

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At Charles Fort, Verner, the factor, had so far taken seriously the letter which he received from a Frenchman at the head-waters of the Rupert, that he was building a bastion to strengthen his post. But so little was an attack expected that the ladder used by the builders was left leaning against the bastion. It must, therefore, discount the credit due to De Troyes and Iberville that the surprise which they effected was largely due to their perpetration of an act of war in a time of profound peace. Verner asked Iberville how he could perpetrate such evil deeds when the two countries were at peace. Iberville drew his hand across his throat, suggesting that he deserved to have his throat cut.

At Albany Fort, the Englishmen had a day's notice of the approach of the Frenchmen, and prepared to make a stand, but they had no battery on the rear palisade of the fort, and, when De Troyes erected a battery on that side, the fur-traders refused to continue their stand. They said that they had no guarantee from the Company that they would receive pensions, as the soldiers in the regular army did when mutilated in battle, nor would their widows be supported by the Company in the case of their being slain. Accordingly, the fort surrendered.

An interesting commentary on these proceedings of the French in 1686, is afforded by an episode at Fort Albany, which the French fur-traders had surrendered in 1693 to a military expedition from England. In 1709, in a time of open warfare, another striking force of French soldiers was sent by the very route taken by De Troyes and Iberville, in the hope of surprising the fort. This time, of course, the English were prepared and on their guard. Cannon were in position,

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and expert gunners to man them. A watch was being kept and the approach of the French reported. The guns of the fort harassed the enemy and took toll in dead. Finally, the French retired baffled and defeated.

As will be seen, there was only one fight on the Bay in which trained forces took part on both sides. Through the courage and expert seamanship of Iberville, victory went to the French.

Henry Kelsey Reaches the Prairies

When Henry Kelsey stepped upon the stage of our Western History, the Hudson's Bay Company, the champion of the rights of England upon Hudson Bay against the French, had lost its three posts on James Bay to De Troyes and Iberville. All that remained to them was York Factory on the River Hayes. Three streams of furs had been dried up for them. Only the peltries coming down from Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan remained. To maintain the bulk of furs needed for the London market it became necessary to exploit the south-west shore of Hudson Bay to the full. The rivers were the water-ways by which the Indians brought down their furs. The first step was to open up forts at their mouths, one on the Severn and another on the Churchill River, so called after Lord Churchill, then Governor of the Company, better known to us by his later title, Duke of Marlborough. Next, it was now well-known that the Hayes and Nelson were the outlets of a vast country, in the lakes and streams of which beaver were abundant and whose furs, because of the long winter, were of the finest quality. The logical course was to send some one up into this unknown region to win the friendship

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of the Indians, induce them to hunt beaver, to put up the skins in the way needed for market, and to bring them down to York Factory on the Bay. This task was allotted to Henry Kelsey.

Kelsey had come out to York Factory as a boy in the year in which Radisson came back to the English Company. In the fort he would see the great *coureur-des-bois* in action and, perhaps, hear him complain that the English stuck to their posts on the Bay, instead of going up to meet the Indians in their homes in the interior. At any rate he caught the spirit of the adventuresome Frenchman, consorted with the savages who came down to the post and learned their language, all in spite of the rules of the Company, which ran that only the trading clerks should have to do with the Indians. The result was that some of the men of the post have passed down the tradition that this Indianized lad was what we would call a bad boy. Nevertheless, Kelsey's love of the ways of the Indians was at that juncture an asset to the Hudson's Bay Company. When a messenger with letters to the new post on the Severn turned back on the way, discouraged, the despatches were handed to Kelsey and an Indian companion who brought back answers within the space of a month. When the fort was being built on the Churchill, it was Kelsey who was sent out on the Barrens to bring the Indians in to trade. He travelled 200 miles in that empty land and returned without having met a soul. This, with the fact that the fort was burned by accident during building, explains why the attempt to establish a trade there was abandoned for the present.

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In the year 1690 Kelsey was sent up, a lone English lad, with some Indians who had come down to York Factory from the interior. He ascended the Hayes and our Fox Rivers, got over to the Nelson at Cross Lake, and followed up the Minago to Moose Lake, and so to the Saskatchewan. There he made something of a base camp which he called Deering's Point, after the Deputy-Governor of the time. This was probably at the "point" made by the sharp bend of the river, some ten to twelve miles below The Pas. From this camp he made a journey to the upper waters of the Red Deer River, doubtless by the Carrot River and out on to the plains north of the Touchwood Hills. He would spend the winter with his Indians trapping furs. In the spring he went back to Deering's Point and despatched a flotilla of canoes to York Factory, sending by it a report of his proceedings. By the returning canoes he received orders to continue the good work, and especially to bring about peace among the Indians, for the Crees, armed with White Man's gun, were devastating the tribes farther inland. Kelsey now ascended the Saskatchewan, as he says, eighteen miles, entered what we call Saskeram Lake, and portaged out to the Saskatchewan again, somewhere not far below our Cumberland House. His intention was to ascend the Saskatchewan but, growing tired of its swift current, he *cached* some goods on the bank against his return, and took to foot. At first the going was very difficult, but in time he came to dry ground in the upper Carrot River valley. He now crossed to the Red Deer River below Nut Lake, to the Indians, whose friendship he had secured on his previous journey. Thence he passed southward to the prairies and to

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the neighbourhood of Touchwood Hills. He was the first European to see the plain north of Touchwood and east of Saskatoon. His journal gives us our first description of the buffalo and of the habits of life of the Indians of the Plains, as they were wellnigh two and a half centuries ago.

Kelsey was very anxious to see a tribe, the Fall or Rapid Indians, whose home, so I would judge, was on the tongue of land made by the great sweep of the Saskatchewan and hard by the falls at Nipawin, but who wandered over the plains about Humboldt and probably as far as Saskatoon. He moved northward and met them, probably somewhere near Humboldt. At a great Council they promised to hunt beaver and to take the skins to York Factory. Here the journal suddenly ends. Kelsey with his Indians must have trapped furs about the Carrot River. In the spring he marshalled the canoes at Deering's Point for the journey to the Bay (1692), but the Fall Indians did not join him, for they had been once more attacked by the Crees.

All Kelsey's efforts were in vain, for two years later the French under Iberville captured York Factory, taking him prisoner. In 1696 Kelsey came back with the English force that recaptured the fort, but in 1697 Iberville returned to his prey. A brilliant naval victory off the mouth of the Hayes River made York Fort once more a French post. Thus Fort Bourbon, as York Fort was now called, reaped all the advantages from Kelsey's journeys to the Upper Country. Meanwhile, the English Company under James Knight had recaptured Fort Albany and succeeded in holding it till peace was declared.

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All the while a great continental war was being waged, and the fate of Hudson Bay was being settled on the plains of Flanders. At last Marlborough's victories brought France to her knees. The Peace of Utrecht surrendered the Bay to the English, and so to the Hudson's Bay Company. Governor Knight and Henry Kelsey, now his deputy, received the formal surrender of the post on the Hayes and installed themselves in what became once more York Factory.

The long years in which the Hudson's Bay Company had borne the brunt of the battle for England, suffered loss after loss, and mostly paid no dividends, came to an end. Once more the English Jack floated from posts all around the Bay. Soon Henry Kelsey became Governor-in-Chief over them all.

The Incomparable Iberville

It has already been said that there was only one battle in Hudson Bay between trained forces on both sides. In 1694 Iberville appeared before York Fort with a naval force, and the fur-traders found it wise to surrender the post to him. The Frenchmen called their capture Fort Bourbon. In 1696 an English naval expedition came out and Fort Bourbon, recaptured, became once more York Fort. Next year, in anticipation of the return of Iberville, the Hudson's Bay Company sent out its goods in two armed ships convoyed by H. M. S. *Hampshire*. Iberville came out with four vessels, the powerful ship being his own frigate the *Pelican*. As it happened, the ships of both flotillas were more or less separated when making their way through the ice of Hudson Strait. The two ships of the Company came on two French vessels. The Frenchmen drove into the ice to prevent the Englishmen from

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overpowering them. The English ships kept firing at them at long range, but finally sailed away from them, believing that they were so battered that they would sink, crushed by the ice. Indeed, the smallest of Iberville's ships falls out of the story, probably wrecked by the ice-floes.

Meanwhile Iberville, unaware of the battle, and even of the presence of the Englishmen, sailed to Port Nelson and anchored in the estuary. His two battered ships made for Churchill River, where they effected repairs. The English flotilla, once more assembled, steered its course for York Fort. When it appeared on the horizon, Iberville took it to be his own ships coming to join him. He raised anchor and sailed down the wind to meet them. When they failed to respond to his signal, he knew that he was in the presence of the English enemy. He was outnumbered three to one. What was he to do? To flee would have been disastrous, for he would have been caught amid the shoals of Port Nelson.

Every intelligent commander knows that, when caught in a tight place, the wise thing is to face the enemy and attack him. That is just what the brave Iberville did. In the first phase of the battle, he got the worst of it. The English ships got to the windward of him and began battering at him at long range. Finally, Captain Fletcher of H. M. S. *Hampshire* decided to sail down on Iberville, apparently intending to manoeuvre him on to a shoal. This gave Iberville the chance to show his incomparable seamanship. He managed in his turn to get the *Hampshire* between him and the shoal. The ships exchanged broadsides.

A wild gale had come up, and, as the *Hampshire* tacked to better her position, she sank and all hands were lost. The

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sea was too wild for Iberville to attempt a rescue. According to the French accounts, the broadside of the *Pelican* sank the *Hampshire*. The tradition in the Hudson's Bay Company's service was that the *Hampshire* "overset", that is, was capsized as she tacked, as would happen if she rested on the shoal with her sails full set in a gust of wind.

The writer asked Dr. Biggar of the office of the Public Archives of Canada, to renew his search for a report to the English Admiralty on the loss of the *Hampshire*. This time the search was not in vain. Captain Fletcher's widow petitioned Admiralty for a war-widow's pension, and, in support of her plea, put in an affidavit sworn to by Captain Michael Grimington of the *Hudson's Bay*, and other officers, distant observers of the event. Here is their testimony in part: ". . . Then the *Hampshire* Tackt, and got to the windward of him [Iberville] bore down on him, and gave him two broadsides, yard arm and yard arm . . . And after the *Hampshire* had given the second broadside filling her Sayles to Wear, she Sunck; at which time there happened a Flaw of Wind, but whether that or the damage she might have received from the Enemy, was the occasion of her Sincking these Deponents cannot say: And further, the Said Samuel Clarke Saith, That he being taken by the French: During the time he continued on Board the French Man of Warr which the said Monsr. D'Brevile [Iberville] had the command of in his return home; He, the said Samuel Clarke, having some Discourse with the said Captaines brother, who spoke English. He told the said Deponent that Captain Fletcher (who commanded the *Hampshire*) was a brave man, and just before he gave his last broad Side, called to the said Monsr. D'Brevile, bidding

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him strike [surrender] which he refusing to do, Captain Fletcher took a Glass and drank to him, telling him, he should dine with him immediately; Upon which the said French Captain Pledged him in another Glass. And there-upon his men Fired a Volley of Small Shott upon the *Hampshire* which was returned with a like volley to the French man; And after that the said Capt. Fletcher was not seen; so that it was Suposed the said Capt. Fletcher was then killed."

York Factory, the Oldest Permanent Settlement in the Province of Manitoba

The earliest post at Port Nelson was that of Groseilliers and Radisson, built on the Hayes River in 1682 when they were in the French service. The Hudson's Bay Company's post on the Nelson was built about three weeks later. When Radisson returned to the English Company's employ in 1684, Governor Geyer at his suggestion built York Fort on the Hayes, about four miles below Groseilliers' post and on the opposite, the left bank. This is the post from which Henry Kelsey started on his memorable voyage to the prairie region, and in which he was when Iberville captured the fort in 1694. Kelsey came back when the English recaptured it in 1696, and was present in the fort when Iberville sank H. M. S. *Hampshire* out in Port Nelson, the estuary of the Nelson and Hayes Rivers. One of his duties was to keep the Journal of the fort. His entry for the day of the battle tells of it blowing very hard at noon, so much so that the sloop in the river dragged her anchor and the pinnace sank at its moorings. Out in the estuary Iberville had to face this wild storm. He had captured one of the Hudson's Bay Company's

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ships, but both it and his own ship the *Pelican* were driven ashore. Fortunately, all the men got ashore safely.

Iberville's position must now have appeared desperate—on an inhospitable shore, with all his provisions, cannon, and ammunition lost, and the English enemy facing him in York Fort. His one hope lay in his two other ships of whose whereabouts he was in ignorance. After the storm blew over, these ships arrived, bringing the armament and the provisions so badly needed. The fort was invested and soon surrendered on terms. Thus Fort York became Fort Bourbon once more. It remained so until the victories of Marlborough in the north of France brought France to sue for peace. By the Treaty of Utrecht, (1713) the French gave up the Bay to the English for good. The final scene was enacted at Fort Bourbon, now on the point of becoming York Fort once more. James Knight was commissioned Governor by the Company to take possession of the Fort, with Henry Kelsey for his deputy. They bore commissions from Queen Anne to take over the fort in the name of the Queen. In 1714 the French Commissioner came out in the Company's ship with them. Knight bought the Frenchmen's goods and all was ready for the surrender. The chief actors stood at the foot of the flagstaff, which was equipped with a cross-arm and two sets of halyards for flying flags. The fleur-de-lys, the French colours, floated at the one end of the cross-arm. In the open space of the fort Indians and the men of the fort and of the ships stood, the spectators of the scene. The French Commissioner read his commission instructing him to surrender the fort; Knight read his paper authorizing him to receive the surrender in behalf of England. The French



JOHN FORD & WEST LONG HISTORIC CAR LOT

FORD & WEST LONG HISTORIC CAR LOT

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Commissioner pulled down the French flag from the one end of the cross-arm, and James Knight ran up the English Jack to the other end, amid a salvo of cannons and guns.

An interesting incident followed. An Indian chief came up to Knight and frankly told him that he did not like his flag; he liked the white flag with the fleur-de-lys. Here, as everywhere, the French won the affections of the savages.

York Fort, or, as it came to be called later, York Factory, has been in occupation ever since. It was burned to the ground by the French Admiral La Pérouse, after he had captured and dismantled Prince of Wales's Fort at the mouth of the Churchill in 1782, but it was immediately rebuilt. Captain John Franklin arrived at the fort in 1819 on his way to delineate the Polar shore of the continent. Here the several groups of immigrants to Selkirk's colony took to their boats for their long inland journey. After the union of the North-West Company with the Hudson's Bay Company, York Factory was the depot for the trade of its vast hinterland, the most important post in all Rupert's Land. Here, as occasion called for it, the Northern Council, which governed the Hudson's Bay Company's Territory and supervised the trade to the Pacific coast, met from time to time. It was from York Fort that Sir George Simpson usually started on his remarkable journeys across the continent. In fact, almost till the time of the transfer of Rupert's Land and the North-West to the Dominion of Canada, York Fort was the centre of almost a continental trade. It was only in 1872, when the Company's goods were coming by way of the United States to Fort Garry, where Winnipeg now stands, and being sent out across the International Boundary, that the

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succession of brigades coming with furs to York Fort and leaving with goods, finally ceased. York Fort now dropped to the status of a post carrying on its local trade. As such it is with us still—the oldest permanent settlement in the present Province of Manitoba—ranking, so far as age goes, next after Quebec, Montreal and Three Rivers and other French settlements on the St. Lawrence.

CHAPTER IV.

French and English in the Interior

La Vérendrye, Explorer in Spite of Himself

La Vérendrye is one of the comparatively few characters of our history to catch the popular imagination. He figures in our school books as an intrepid explorer of the trackless West. Our English-speaking youths admire him; the French Canadians adore him and give him a conspicuous place in every pageant recalling the historic past. The man whom the historian knows is of very different complexion.

La Vérendrye was a native of Three Rivers, a child of New France and wholly given up to the good of his native land. He was also a soldier who sought promotion in the King's service by bravery and self-sacrifice. He was in the thick of the fight at Malplaquet against that English soldier-statesman, the Duke of Marlborough, and received nine wounds in that bloody fray. The leading motives of his life are best expressed in his own words, written when he was at Michilmakniac on the way to his great enterprise in the North-West, and addressed to Maurepas, the French Colonial Minister: "I am only seeking to carry the name and arms of His Majesty into a vast stretch of countries hitherto unknown, to enlarge the colony and increase its commerce." If these ideals, the good of his native land and expansion of France, were the obverse side of the man's mind, the reverse was a healthy French hatred of the English and the determination to ruin their fur trade in the North-West.

When Commandant of the French post at Kaministiquia, where Fort William now stands, and Nipigon River on the

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north shore of Lake Superior, La Vérendrye was in sharp competition with the Hudson's Bay Company's post on the River Albany and got ample information concerning the wealth of furs in the North-West. He began to cherish the dream of saving his colony, whose trade was threatened with decline, by diverting the furs of the North-West, which were going down to the English at Hudson Bay, into the channel whose outlet was at Montreal and Quebec. He saw himself taking possession of that vast region in the name of his King and confining the English to the barren shores of Hudson Bay. In spite of disasters, as when his son and most of his associates and servants were massacred by the Sioux on Lake of the Woods, and in the face of gross injustice at the hands of the Colonial Minister, he cherished this vision to his dying day.

Unfortunately for the man's dreams, the French Colonial Office of his day was averse to the expansion of the colony on the St. Lawrence westward. They were aware that the English in the colonies to the south were, from a military point of view, strong, because they were compact settlements; while the French colony was weak, because its people were not greatly interested in agriculture, but were lured by the fur trade farther and farther afield towards the beaver regions of the West. La Vérendrye was, therefore, not likely to get permission to establish posts in the far west. But Maurepas, the Colonial Minister, and the Jesuits were greatly concerned to find the way to the Western Sea, our Pacific Ocean. Now La Vérendrye's information was to the effect that Lake Winnipeg stretched east and west, and that the river flowing out of the lake (our Nelson River) ran westward,

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presumably to the Pacific Coast. He, therefore, sent in a memoir asking permission to establish a fur-trading post on Lake Winnipeg, and gilded his enterprise with the hope of news of the way to the Western Sea. With this in view the Governor of Canada, Beauharnois, who was anxious to keep up the fur trade of his colony, sent him in as Commandant of the Posts of the West. When the Colonial Ministry's reply came to Canada it appeared that La Vérendrye was expected to make the search for the Western Sea his chief task, and that the forts established were simply to help him westwards. Thus, La Vérendrye became an explorer in spite of himself.

That the great Frenchman was far more eager to occupy the country and take the Englishmen's fur trade away from them is manifest by his actions. In 1731 he sent his nephew La Jemeraye in to build a post near Rainy Lake, on a site occupied by the French fifty years before. In 1732 he explored the region of the Lake of the Woods and built Fort St. Charles on its western shore. For five years he went no farther himself, but in his capacity as "Commandant of the Western Posts" he sent La Jemeraye and his eldest son, Jean-Baptiste de La Vérendrye, to build Fort Maurepas on the Red River, not very far from Lake Winnipeg. By this time it was known that Lake Winnipeg stretched north and south, and that the river which flowed out of it ran into Hudson Bay, but word was got of the River Missouri, and it was thought that that great river might flow into the Western Sea, and Maurepas was eager for its exploration.

If La Vérendrye had expected that he would be allowed to go on taking possession of the great fur-region of the North-West, and postponing exploration to a more convenient

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season he was mistaken. In 1735 he was told that if he did not explore he would be dismissed. He promised all obedience, but the Massacre on the Lake of the Woods made it impossible to keep his word. In 1737 he was told for the second time that he would be recalled if he did not explore to the River of the West. Accordingly, the next year saw him tramping across the prairies to the Mandans, but he stopped at the first Mandan fort and contented himself with sending his son the Chevalier to look at the river, the Missouri. This expedition, which took a little over four months, is all the real search for the Western Sea that La Vérendrye ever did in person. Thereafter he settled down to supervise the occupation of the country. In 1738 he had built Fort la Reine near Portage la Prairie, across the path of the Assiniboin to the English posts on the Bay. In 1741 he had his son Pierre build Fort Dauphin, near the shore of Lake Winnipegosis, and Fort Bourbon on Cedar Lake. This last fort was at the point where the Indians assembled to go down to the English at York Bay. It was intended to divert their furs to the French. Manifestly La Vérendrye never abandoned his original plan of occupying the country at the expense of the English. He relegated the exploring of the Missouri valley to his sons. In 1744 he resigned his command on the ground of sickness, but there is much reason to believe that he was recalled for not making exploration the main part of his enterprise. He was re-appointed to his command in 1749, but died on the eve of his departure for the west. His greatness lies in his sacrificing himself and all his means to place the French in possession of the North-West, and to keep his native colony prosperous by diverting

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its furs from the English at the Bay to the French on the St. Lawrence. He achieved his aims, for he put the North-West as far as the lower Saskatchewan into the French King's hand, and the furs of that region brought a harvest of gold to Montreal and Quebec. Champlain gave France the East; La Vérendrye brought her the West.

La Vérendrye and the Perils of the Traffic in Guns

When the White Man's horse and his gun came to the Indians of the North-West, they worked revolutions, especially in its warfare. The Snakes on horseback were riding down the valley of the South Saskatchewan and carrying everything before them. To stem the tide of invasion the Blackfeet called in the Crees and Assiniboina armed with guns. Thus they drove the Snakes back to their old range on the Missouri, and themselves occupied the upper valley of the lordly Saskatchewan. A similar drama was being enacted in the north. The Crees from between Lake Winnipeg and Hudson Bay, armed with guns, doubtless procured from the French Fort Bourbon on Hudson Bay, drove the Chipewyans from the fine beaver region south of the River Churchill, and threatened to occupy the basin of Lake Athabaska. Only when the Chipewyans procured the White Man's gun were they able to stay the terrible advance. On the banks of the Beaver River of that time they compelled the Crees to a treaty of peace, from which the stream came to be known as *la rivière de la paix*, the Peace River as we know it. No wonder the savages turned industriously to hunt for furs, when they could trade them for such a potent weapon as the gun. No wonder if nations, which won such

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easy victories with the White Man's implements of war, regarded the fur-traders as their friends and protectors. But what of the tribes beyond who suffered defeat? They looked on the fur-trader's forts much as the allies looked on Krupp's great factory of arms. They tried to force their way through to them to destroy them, or at least punish them. Thus, the White Man's gun traffic was hedged round with perils. This La Vérendrye learned by tragic experience.

When the great French commandant built his Fort St. Charles on the Lake of the Woods, the Monsonis and Crees of those parts looked on him as their deliverer from the savage attacks of the Sioux. They asked him to give them his eldest son Jean-Baptiste to lead them on the war-path against the Sioux of the Plains. In 1734 a solemn Council was held within the fort. La Vérendrye was seated on the one side; his son stood beside him. Over against them sat the fourteen war-chiefs in full attire, feathers, and paint. In the centre were placed the White Chief's presents to his savage subjects. "One 50 pound barrel of powder, 100 pounds of ball, 400 gun-flints, fire-steels, ramrods, awls, butcher knives in proportion, and 30 fathoms of tobacco." The Council must have opened with the usual prolonged hush with which Indian councils opened. La Vérendrye began by making the presentation to the host which crowded the fort. In addition he gave to each chief "two pounds of powder, four balls, two fathoms of tobacco, one knife, two awls, six flints and one gun-screw." Finally he promised his son for the war-path. Two chiefs voiced the thanks of the warriors. Then La Vérendrye, in true Indian style—the French knew how to please their dusky subjects—rose from his seat, a tomahawk

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in his hand, and, giving it to the leader of the host, told him to do his duty well. He concluded this piece of acting by giving the war-cry. The Council broke up with all, the La Vérendryes included, chanting the war-song. No wonder the Indians of the forest gathered around the Frenchman and gave him their whole-souled devotion.

But what of the Sioux of the Plains? They waited two whole years, till 1736, for their chance. As fortune would have it, La Vérendrye's merchant backers were slack in making provision for his fort. The food supply was short; worse still, gunpowder was needed, and the Sioux were known to be prowling in the neighbourhood. An emergency expedition had to be sent down to Lake Superior for supplies. Father Aulneau, the Jesuit priest, elected to go with it. La Vérendrye put his eldest son, Jean-Baptiste, in command. The last word of the father to his son was to be on the alert.

A trader named Bourassa had preceded this expedition. He was caught by the Sioux, who charged the French with arming their enemies. They were in the act of killing Bourassa when his squaw, a Sioux by blood, pleaded mercy for him, for he had been good to her. The Sioux granted her his life, but they wrested from her the fact that a party was following in her wake. No one knows just what happened, but Jean-Baptiste, Father Aulneau, and the whole party were afterwards found biting the dust in death on a lonely island in the Lake of the Woods. It is still known as Massacre Island. La Vérendrye's lament runs: "In that calamity I lost my son, the Reverend Father, and all my Frenchmen, to my

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life-long regret." It was the price the great French fur-trader and commandant paid for his traffic in arms.

La Corne's Fort

The occupation by the French of the fur forest behind York Fort reached its culmination with the building of Fort Paskoyac at The Pas in 1749 and Fort St. Louis by La Corne in 1753. A line of forts all the way from Kaministikwia, where Fort William now stands on Lake Superior, to the Saskatchewan north of Kinistino, Saskatchewan, hemmed the English in to the inhospitable shore of Hudson Bay, and was diverting the furs, which used to go to them at York Fort, to the French at Montreal.

It may be interesting to ask what a fur-trader's post looked like. It must be remembered that the traders' highways were the rivers and lakes. Their posts were, therefore, built near the water, anything from ten yards to a hundred back from the water-front. They were protected from assault by the savages by palisades, a wall of logs standing about fifteen feet upright out of the ground. Naturally, the front gate was in the centre of the wall facing the water. There was a back gate on the innermost palisade. Bastions were built on the palisades, reaching out beyond them, so that the traders could shoot along the wall, and especially command the gates, in case of assault. The houses were usually ranged along the inner sides of the palisade, with the chief, the *bourgeois*' house more in the centre facing the front gate. Around it was an open space, across which the Indian chiefs passed in ceremonial procession, saluted by a volley of guns and the hoisting of the flag, to council with the great man of

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the fort. The houses were, of course, little more than shacks, with birch bark or sod roofs. Some had cellars, and, usually, there was a wide and deep cellar under the ice-house where fresh buffalo meat was stored in ice for provision for the fort after winter was past. Some houses had fireplaces of stone more or less loosely packed together, and the chimneys were made of poplar poles run up and held together by cross-pieces. This wood framework was plastered with mud. Often the plaster came tumbling down, to the great disgust of the traders, and equally frequently the chimney caught fire to their intense alarm. The ruins of the forts, as they are today, are marked by the cellars and the chimney heaps, that is mounds of the mud of the chimney which has fallen over stone fire-places usually, though not always, standing beside the cellars. Sometimes the position of the bastion can be traced, more rarely the line of the palisades. In any case, the palisades would run so as to include within them the cellars and chimney-heaps. The French forts were usually narrow and long, with the narrow end to the water. The English forts were usually square.

The site of La Corne's fort has recently been identified. The tradition in the Hudson's Bay Company's service has been that their Fort à la Corne was built on its site in 1850, that would be a hundred years after La Corne built his post, which was called St. Louis. But Matthew Cocking, of whom we shall hear more, passed from York Fort by the Saskatchewan to the site of La Corne's fort in ruins, where he abandoned his canoe to pass on foot over the prairies. He kept a journal and a log, the latter showing his distances and directions. The writer had long sought for La Corne's post,

A Letter from Anthony Henday to Gov. Igham
To Mr. James Igham Governor in Chief of York
Fort & Hall

Hon. Sir

Dated at Deposition fall July
the 2^d 1754.



Having an Opportunity of sending a
line or two by these Indians this is to in-
form you the River we are now in is nothing
but Falls, Rocks, and Islands, We are Obliged
to Carry the Canoes and things over most of
them, and have been obliged to do ever since
we left the River that goes into the North
River

which is about 60 Miles above where
we cross the Island, We are all in good
health at present, for we made a good
Dinner on the roots of Rushes such as the
Cooper use about this Fork, having no
thing else to eat for two Days but two
Jack, but we are to see a place to morrow
where we shall take them up with our
hands, Sir I hope your Honour will excuse
my Assurance, Sir I remain your Obedient
Servant, and will endeavour to Discharge the
trifle laid on me

Anthony Henday

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but with uncertain results until he was given the permission of the Hudson's Bay Company to look over Cocking's log. He now saw that the fort must have stood on the same low ledge of the river, about two miles west of the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort à la Corne. On his last visit to the region he had the good fortune to have intelligent Indians rejoicing in the names of Robert Burns and Nehemiah Walker directing him. On his insisting that there must be remains west of the Company's site, Robert Burns assured him that there were some holes about one mile to the west. As he walked towards them, the question was raised, how would we identify the remains as being of a French post. The answer was that in all probability the cellars and chimney-heaps would indicate a long narrow fort, with its narrow end to the river. Such proved to be the case. The palisades, which would enclose the five mounds and six cellars, would be sixty by a hundred and fifty feet, with the narrow end facing the river and about a hundred feet from the bank.

There are many remains of later forts along the banks of the Saskatchewan, the Assiniboine, and the Qu'Appelle Rivers. Few of the farmers, on whose land they are found, know of it; they live all unconscious of the history that lies concealed on their property.

Anthony Henday, the First European to see the Canadian Rockies, 1754

The line of French forts, running north-westward across the hinterland of York Fort, hemmed the English in to the shores of Hudson Bay and was diverting the furs from York Fort to the French at Montreal. The two forts, which did the greatest injury to the Hudson's Bay Company, were

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Fort Paskoyac at the present The Pas, and La Corne's fort on the Saskatchewan, just east of the Indian Reservation north of Kinistino. This was because by far the greater bulk of the furs coming to Fort York from the more distant interior was from the valley of the Saskatchewan. The furs were taken down by one or other of two routes. The furs of the Carrot River region were embarked in the neighbourhood of The Pas and passed down the Saskatchewan to its tributary coming in from Moose Lake. This was ascended and the Minago River followed eastward. Fort Paskoyac commanded this route. The other water-way ran down the Saskatchewan, but left it near Cumberland Lake to pass up the Sturgeon-Weir and Goose Rivers to Cranberry Portage and down Grass River leading eastward. La Corne's post commanded this route by which the furs from the upper Saskatchewan passed down to York Fort. The volume of furs coming to the English post suddenly declined after this French fort was built. Accordingly, it was decided to send Anthony Henday (often wrongly called Hendry) "to view the country" and report. Henday's journey is a marvel for the distance covered by him, and for the safety with which he passed through the Indians of the Plains to trap furs within sight of the Rockies.

The many rivers of our North-West and the Indian canoes on them made travelling easy in the days when there were no roads. Had La Vérendrye dismissed his dream of acquiring the fur-regions of the West for France and devoted himself to exploration, he would have been the first white man to see the Canadian Rockies. His persistence in following political and commercial aims allowed the honour of crossing the plains to within sight of the Rocky Mountains,

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to fall to an Englishman, a servant of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Anthony Henday must have been a daring character from his youth, for his first means of livelihood was smuggling, doubtless on the south coast of England, for he was born in the Isle of Wight. When he was caught and outlawed he engaged himself to the Hudson's Bay Company for service in their forts on Hudson Bay and was placed at York Factory. When it was decided that some one should be sent inland from York Factory to make a special plea with the Indians to continue to bring down their furs, and, at the same time, to report upon the situation on the Saskatchewan, Henday, a "bold and enterprising man," offered himself for the mission.

The plan of Henday's expedition was in sharp contrast with that of La Vérendrye. There was no intention of occupying the country. Henday did not go in as a governor with a staff of officers and servants. He went up, a lone servant of his Company, to play the part of scout for it. He did not enter the country with six large canoes laden with goods to trade, but with a small consignment of goods for presents and in the canoe of one of the Indians who had come down to trade. He lost no time building posts, nor did he stay to garrison them. In simple guise, he drifted with the Indians towards their trapping ground.

On June 26, 1754, Henday left York Factory. He ascended the Hayes and Fox Rivers, reached the Nelson at Cross Lake, passed up the Minago and through Moose Lake to the Saskatchewan. At The Pas he found the French Fort Pas-koyac, built by Pierre La Vérendrye in 1749 and now headquarters of Louis François de la Corne, across his path.

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Challenged by the Frenchmen as to the object of the journey he answered "to view the country." He passed on up the Carrot River, where his Indians abandoned their canoes and joined their families, which had been left behind when the men went forward to York Factory.

The country Henday saw was very different from the land we see today as we rush along by train or motor-car. Passing along through the region now traversed by the Canadian National Railway from Humboldt to Clarkboro, he was now in the prairie, "the Muscuty plains," now on the edge of the northern woods. The party killed moose almost daily; on the prairie they killed red deer. The South Saskatchewan was crossed somewhere near Fish Creek. Beyond the Elbow of the North Saskatchewan and south of the valley of the Battle River Henday was still on the edge of the prairie and the woods, eating fresh moose flesh from time to time. The party had plenty to eat and spent much time feasting, drumming, and dancing. They do not seem to have cared how far they journeyed in a day. Sometimes they remained stationary, sometimes travelled four or fifteen miles a day, but mostly about seven. Yet by October 11 they were at the Red Deer River in Alberta, somewhere west of our Stettler. After an interview with the Bloods, who politely declined his invitation to take furs down to York Factory, Henday crossed the Red Deer again, west of the present Didsbury, Alberta, and spent the winter trapping within sight of the Rockies. His load of furs procured, on December 24 from a hillock he said goodbye to the Rocky Mountains. As spring drew near he drifted north-eastward, passing close to our Wetaskwin and reaching the North Saskatchewan below

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Edmonton. He and his Indians travelled down the river on the ice till they found birch-bark to make canoes. Compared with the long journey by canoe upstream and on foot across the prairies, the trip homeward in canoes on the spring flood must have seemed like luxurious travelling. After visiting La Corne's outpost, Fort St. Louis, and the fort at The Pas, Henday reached York Factory on June 20—a year less one week from the date of his departure, and the journey was more than 2000 miles! La Vérendrye's explorations pale into insignificance beside the achievement of this Englishman.

Anthony Henday's expedition was, of course, in the interest of the trade of the Hudson's Bay Company. His report was that, with the French forts at their door, the Indians could not be induced to come down to the Bay in any great numbers. The Hudson's Bay Company was faced with the necessity of coming inland, as it did under similar circumstances in 1774 to Cumberland House. However, the year after Henday's journey the Seven Years' War broke out. Canada was conquered and became British, and the Hudson's Bay Company was relieved of its French rivals for good.

William Pink on the Beaver River and the North Saskatchewan, 1767-8

After Henday's remarkable journey to within sight of the Rockies the Hudson's Bay Company found that it paid to send servants into the interior. Each went with a band of Indians who were visiting York Fort, and his mission was to urge the savages to trap beaver and bring their furs past the French forts down to the Bay. Between 1754-5, the date of Henday's voyage, and 1774, when Samuel Hearne was sent

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in to build Cumberland House, the first post of the Company in the interior, something like sixty such journeys were made by the Company's servants. Anthony Henday returned with his former companions, it may be presumed to his previous trapping-ground within sight of the Rockies. Later Henry Pressick came in with the same band and induced some Bloods to take their furs down to York Fort. Joseph Smith spent his first winter in the interior in the valley of the Swan River, going out on to the prairies of the upper Assiniboine to get the buffalo meat for the pemmican needed for his return voyage. On his second voyage, he passed down Lake Manitoba, trapped furs south of Lake Dauphin, got his pemmican on the Assiniboine, and built the canoes for his return journey on the Swan River. On his third, he trapped furs somewhere about Wakaw, Saskatchewan, and built his canoes on the South Saskatchewan with bark from the Birch Hills.

From Severn Fort on the Bay, William Tomison came in on two voyages, up Severn River to Lake Winnipeg and to Lake Manitoba. Louis Primo, a French-Canadian in the Company's service, made the Churchill River his chief resort.

But the favourite course was up the North Saskatchewan to trap in the forest region north of that stream. Isaac Batt, James Allen, Edward Deering, and others, found this their happy hunting ground. These men have left no record of their journeys, but a servant, rejoicing in the lady-like name of William Pink, kept journals which survive. He spent one winter in the region north of Saskatoon. His most remarkable journey, however, was in 1767-8 to the Beaver River and almost as far as Lac la Biche. He and his Indians came in by the Minago River and Moose Lake to the Saskatchewan

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and so to the site of the French Fort Paskoyac at The Pas, now frequented only by Indians. The spelling of his journal is so original that the entry of this date is worth giving. "July 24 this eavinging j put put up about halfe a mild [mile] a' bove the first French house; heare j found 7 Tents of jndians." Passing up the Saskatchewan he reached the site of La Corne's fort, abandoned some twelve years before. "Aug. 6 this day we piched [pitched tent] on the N. side of this River opposite to the Ruiens of the uper French House; here j found Tenting Twelve Tents of Indaines. Seven ware of Sinnapoits [Assiniboin], a bout Forty horses; this eavinging we threw a way our Canoes."

Pink's journey was now on foot westward through the country north of the Saskatchewan. He was most probably the first European to pass near the present Shellbrook, Saskatchewan, and up the Shell River. He passed near Jackfish Lake and the present Meota, and near Turtleford, to the neighbourhood of Frog Lake, Alberta. Soon he was on streams flowing north into Beaver River and he passed up the Beaver itself. This stream, he tells us, was formed by two branches, each called Beaver River. On our maps they are the Beaver coming from the north and the Amisk, the Indian word for Beaver, coming from the west. He went up the former towards Lac la Biche and later crossed the Amisk on a southerly course. Here he was very near the height of land looking down on the valley of the Athabaska River. By this time Pink and his Indians had all the furs they could carry. They now took a south-easterly course to the North Saskatchewan, where they got from the prairies the pemmican needed for

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the return journey. Pink had left York Fort on July 3, and he returned on June 28, having performed the remarkable journey of more than 1500 miles in four days less than a year.

On the return journey Pink was joined by several of his fellow servants, who had spent the winter with as many bands of Indians far up the Saskatchewan. Yet our books tell us that the men of the Hudson's Bay Company were unenterprising, that the first Englishmen to enter the country came from Montreal! The first Englishman from Montreal, James Finlay, came up the Saskatchewan to a fort north of the present Codette, Saskatchewan, in the autumn of the year after this astonishing journey of William Pink.

Matthew Cocking and the Pedlars

William Pink's voyage of 1767-8 marks the date of the arrival on the Saskatchewan of the Pedlars, as the Hudson's Bay Company called the men from Montreal because they brought their goods, as it were, to the tipis of the Indians. As Pink passed down the main Saskatchewan he came upon a French-Canadian, François le Blanc, probably a former servant of La Corne's, who had spent the winter in a temporary post near Mosquito Point. Next summer he moved upstream and built a post, remains of which can still be seen on the south bank of the river north of Codette, Saskatchewan. James Finlay, the first Englishman from Montreal, was in some sort of business relation with him and arrived at this new post in the autumn with goods from Montreal. Next year a post was built on Cedar Lake by Thomas Corry in the service of Messrs. Todd and McGill (the James McGill whose wealth later established McGill College). Joseph Fulton had

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a post near Lake Dauphin, and his partner, Peter Pangman, may have been in a rival post beside that of Thomas Corry. There were, likewise, posts near Portage la Prairie, where the Indians crossed from the valley of the Assiniboine to Lake Manitoba on their way to the Hudson's Bay Company's York Fort. Indeed, at this stage it was the practice of the Pedlars to get an easy harvest of furs by lodging themselves by the water-ways, by which the Indians would be going with their furs down to the English on the Bay.

Some of the Pedlars were grossly ignorant, if enterprising, men. The chief article of their trade was rum. Only very valuable articles could bear the cost of the long carriage from Montreal to the North-West, and rum was the chief of these. It was carried in a highly concentrated form called "high wines." When Corry would arrive at Cedar Lake, he could add the superabundant water of the lake to his keg of high wines and make it eight kegs. This liquor traffic made the Pedlars' posts scenes of pandemonium, a great contrast with the English Company's posts, which were run like orderly garrisons and in which rum was not traded for beaver. Corry played the subtle game of persuading an Indian named Wabunashui, who used to lead a large band of Indians down to York Fort, to abandon the English cause and settle in his fort. He clothed him and his squaw with all the finery in sight and admitted him to his own table, on the understanding that he would bring his old companions of the journey to York Fort to trade at the Pedlar's post. A letter written by Corry to the Factor at York Fort is certain evidence of the disgraceful scenes at his fort, and of the subtle

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game played with the Indians, besides showing that he must have been a rough master of an unscrupulous crew.

"Sir—Wabunashui desired me to let you know that he Dwoe knot go to see you this Springe, but Send his pipe Stem and Will go to the Grandportage [on Lake Superior] with me; if you have ane [any] thing to Send him, you may send it by the Bellhom [Belhomme]; he says he will Com to see you the next Spring; he hopes you will not Bee angre [angry] with him, as he has Drank Soo much Brandy this winter he canot Com, But must Com with me to the Grandportage to drink two or three casks.

Dear Sir, as I have 2 of my men that has Robed [robbed] me this winter and ar with the Indine, I suppose the [they] will com to your fort. I should Be mush oblight [obliged] to you if you wold send them to London [as prisoners] and I will Pay thir Passage. I hope to Be in London in Novmber next. I ask your Pardon for writing to you in such a manner, But you must think in what Confusion I am in with two hundred Drunken villions about me N. B. the two men names his one John Cool [Cole] a new English man [a New Englander], the other Bove a Canaden."

With the Pedlars lodged on the routes leading to York Fort, the crisis precipitated in the time of French competition was renewed. Matthew Cocking, the accountant at York Fort, was sent into the interior to view the situation and report. He reached the Saskatchewan by way of Moose Lake and abandoned his canoes at the site of La Corne's fort. Travelling with a band of Indians on foot, he passed north of the Birch Hills and reached the South Saskatchewan west

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of St. Louis. Here he found an assembly of Indians, whom he tried to persuade to accompany him with their furs down to York Fort, but, to his chagrin, he learned that the Pedlars' posts in the country had changed their mental outlook. They no longer contemplated the journey to Hudson Bay, but expected the fur-traders to bring their goods, so to say, to their door.

Cocking passed near Duck Lake to the Elbow of the North Saskatchewan, skirted the Eagle Hills and trapped wolves in the neighbourhood of the present Biggar, Saskatchewan, west of which he visited a great camp of the Rapid Indians. He now passed along the north edge of the Eagle Hills and crossed the North Saskatchewan on the ice not far east of Denholm, Saskatchewan. He was aiming for the Wood Crees who trapped beaver among the Thickwood Hills. With them and their furs he must have passed near Marcelin, Saskatchewan, to the neighbourhood of Carlton, where he got his pemmican for the return voyage and built his canoes. Though he got promises from the Indians to go with him to York Fort, they traded their best furs with François le Blanc at his fort north of Codette. Cocking returned to York Fort, prepared to urge the Hudson's Bay Company to build posts in the interior over against the Pedlars. He arrived to find that the decision to do so had been made already by the Governor and Committee in London.

Cumberland House, the Oldest Permanent Settlement in the Province of Saskatchewan

In 1774 it had been decided by the Hudson's Bay Company that the Indians would no longer be willing to take

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their furs all the way from the prairies down to York Fort on the Bay, but would give their custom to the Pedlars, whose forts had been built on the routes by which they would pass. There must be forts over against the Pedlar's posts in the interior. Samuel Hearne, who had recently returned from his notable journey to the Coppermine, was charged with the duty of inaugurating the new policy with Matthew Cocking for his second. He was instructed to build a post at or near Paskoyac.

An initial difficulty was that the Company had no large birch-bark canoes, for all the traffic hitherto had been with the Indians coming in small craft, which would accommodate no more than three men and a few furs. It was decided that Indians arriving at York Fort should be retained to take up the Englishmen and the goods in detachments. This led to a laughable result. Hearne went with a band which took him up by the Grass River route and by Cranberry Portage to Cumberland Lake. He left his medicine chest to be brought up by Matthew Cocking and his Indians. But the Indians who brought Cocking in were from Lake Winnipegosis and Red Deer River. They, accordingly, took the route by Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan to Cedar Lake. When they got that far, they decided that it would be much happier for them to have Cocking spend his winter and distribute his goods among their own band on Red Deer River. Cocking was helpless. He resigned himself to necessity and passed the winter on the Red Deer River, more or less in the neighbourhood of the present Hudson's Bay Junction—and Hearne's medicine chest with him!

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Hearne conducted a careful enquiry before pitching on the site for his fort. He explored Cumberland Lake and found plenty of good wood, but seems to have thought that the shore was too low and wet. At that time the Saskatchewan River did not flow into Cumberland Lake but took a course about two miles south of it. Tributaries flowing into it from the two ends of the lake made an island between the lake and the river. Hearne entered a pleasant bay on this island and portaged across to the Saskatchewan, down which he explored as far as The Pas, Manitoba. He saw a Pedlar's post opposite the mouth of the Carrot River and the remains of the French Fort Paskoyac on the right bank immediately below the Pasquia River. Not satisfied, he returned to Cumberland Lake, and there determined to build on the pleasant bay within easy reach of the Saskatchewan. The site chosen was one mile east of the present Cumberland House. That Hearne was correct about the wetness of the soil appeared subsequently, when it proved necessary to bail the water out of the cellars of the fort in springtime. But there were two substantial reasons for the choice of the site. At Paskoyac, Hearne would have had but one band of Indians to deal with; on Cumberland Lake he had three; to the north, to the west, and on the south the natives of the Carrot River valley. Moreover, Cumberland House as he called the post, after a previous fort at the mouth of the Nelson River, built shortly after the battle of Culloden, when the Duke of Cumberland was the hero of England, was at a strategic point in the system of transportation of the day. It was close to that great east and west water-way, the Saskatchewan, and not far from the

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water-routes running north to the Churchill at Portage du Traite, and north and east by the Grass River to York Fort. So well situated was the post that it has continued in occupation ever since; it is the oldest permanent settlement in the present Province of Saskatchewan.

One of the most interesting episodes in the long history of Cumberland House had to do with the epidemic of small-pox in 1781. William Tomison was Chief Factor, a crusty customer, holding his men under strict discipline according to the standards of the Hudson's Bay Company, boldly asserting the rights of his Company in the face of the Pedlars, and keeping the Indians in their proper place, but withal a man just in his dealings and of a kindly nature. When the Indians came in, some of them stricken with small-pox, others, chiefly women, starving because there was none to hunt and get provisions, Tomison made the fort a sort of relief station. Some he took into the post and set aside a man to care for them night and day. When there were too many to be taken in, he set up a segregation camp and told men off to cut firewood and to catch fish for the sick and starving, "although, God knows, we can ill afford it," for at that time of year fish, the main diet of the post, were very scarce. The men of the post were kept busy making coffins and digging graves. Red men were buried by white hands. Providence, assisted by a supply of flower of sulphur, seems to have watched over these humane Englishmen. Not one was stricken by the scourge.

The great day of Cumberland House was during the rivalry of the North-West Company with the Hudson's Bay Company. Each concern had its Cumberland House, and

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many hundredweight of pemmican from far up the Saskatchewan were deposited at these "depots" to provision the Churchill and Athabaska brigades, on their way eastward or on their return northward. In Tomison's time there was already a garden at the English post, and in Governor Williams' day, just before the union of the two companies, it was the main residence of the Governor of Rupert's Land. He created a farm and grew barley; and he brought in horses and cattle and pigs. But after the union, Norway House became the great depot, and there were too few men stationed at Cumberland House to care for things properly. A passer-by thus describes the place in 1833: "The house was all but falling to pieces; the implements of tillage, and the capacious barns, were silent monuments of waste; the horses were becoming wild, the oxen occasional truants; the cows, although they went "to the milk-pail twice a day," gave by no means a virgilian quantity of that sober and nutritious beverage; and a solitary hog stood every chance of dying without issue." Yet there was still a place for Cumberland House as the source of supplies to the natives and trappers of its region. It plays its part as such today.

CHAPTER V.

The Indians and the Fur-Traders

The Indians Teach the White Men

From the time at which the Pedlars came into the North-West and the Hudson's Bay Company began to build posts inland, the relations of the Indians with the fur-traders come more and more clearly into view. A considerable number of the journals kept at the forts have survived, and men like Alexander Henry and Sir Alexander Mackenzie have written books in which their relations with the savages receive attention in an incidental way. It is very evident that, while the Europeans had much to contribute towards the comfort of Indian life, the natives played their part in making things smooth for the traders.

The Whites wanted the Indians' furs and the Red Men found that their lot, always hard, and their livelihood, always precarious, were made easier by the use of the White Man's gun for killing large game, and of his iron implements and traps for hunting beaver and the smaller game. Mutual interests kept the two races, in the main, in friendly and happy relation. All this lies on the surface, but we Whites, with our superiority complex, have not yet sufficiently appreciated the extent to which, at the beginning, the Indians were the teachers and the White Men more the scholars sitting at their feet.

When the Whites looked westward from the St. Lawrence, from the Lachine Rapids above Montreal, beyond which their ships could not go, they saw a vast land of unbroken forests, through which they could not pass with

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their accustomed means of transport.—heavy boats, lumbering carts, or even that faithful friend of civilization, the horse. It was the Indians who taught them how to overcome nature and penetrate the vast forest regions. It was the Red Men who pointed out the path to the western prairies. First of all, they gave them the birch-bark canoe. Using the small craft of the Red Men for their model, the fur-traders built larger and larger canoes until, in Sir Alexander Mackenzie's time, the traders left Lachine in canoes manned by eight or ten men with 65 packages of merchandise, 90 pounds each, and provisions for the long journey to the neighbourhood of Thunder Bay and our Fort William, on the north-west shore of Lake Superior. It was the Indians who taught them to carry their light canoes over the portages, to drag them up or navigate them down rapids with perfect safety. It was the Indian guides who took Champlain safely up the Ottawa River and its tributary the Mattawa, over the height of land to Lake Nipissing, and down the river which came to bear the name French River, to Lake Huron.

Even so, the White Men could not have penetrated to the west if the problem of their food supply were not solved. It was the Indian corn that made the first stages of the long journey possible. It was the Indian recipe—cornmeal mixed with fat, a healthy strength-giving diet and easily preserved and because of small bulk easily carried—that made the long journey to the Upper Lakes possible. Moreover, it was the Indians who taught them how to live by the way, if provisions gave out; how to fish and where to fish; how to track the elusive moose and where; and, finally, how to make soup

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from the moss on the rocks, when face to face with starvation.

West of Lake Superior it was again the Indians who were the teachers and guides. It was the Indians who showed the Frenchmen the water-way from Grand Portage on Lake Superior, just south of the International Boundary, along the waters, which form that boundary to Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods. It was the Indians, too, who taught them to use the wild rice, growing in the marshes by the way, to provision the crews as they went. They just ran their canoes among the rice banks, brought the heads of rice over the gunwale, and beat the grains off into a receptacle.

When the fur-traders got to Lake Winnipeg the problem of a food supply changed. There was no longer corn or rice to be had. What could be done? The Indian stepped forward with his pemmican, a mixture usually in equal parts of dried meat (smoked and pounded) and fat, "grease" as it was called. At times pemmican was flavoured with Saskatoon berries. With this to hand in plenty from the buffalo plains, the fur-traders could penetrate up the Assiniboine, or the Saskatchewan, and even by the Churchill River to Athabaska, and could take their furs out swiftly and with comfort to distant Lake Superior. Finally, it was the Indians who taught the White Men how to live through the winter in the dearth-stricken forests of the north. They showed them where the fish abounded in the lakes, and the sites near by for their forts; they taught them to fish through the ice, and, as the fish retired with the depth of winter, to follow them out into the middle of the lake.

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The friendliness which the Whites showed to the Indians was doubly repaid by all the schooling given them by the Indians, in the art of travelling and living in the inhospitable North-West.

Sons and Brothers to the Indians

For the most part, the happy relations with the Indians, which have characterized the Whites of the Canadian West, are due in no small measure to the Red Men's custom of adopting people of no blood connection to be their sons and brothers. During the French régime the Frenchmen frankly accepted the custom when it was extended to include them, and they played the part of sons and brothers to the Red Men who adopted them. After the conquest of Canada the English fur-traders from Montreal followed the interesting tradition. For example, Alexander Henry, the elder, who was one of the first of the English to come westward from Montreal, frankly allowed himself to be adopted by an Indian named Wa-wa-tam at Michilimackinac. All the Indians of the neighbourhood were the allies of the French and against the English. In fact, in Pontiac's rebellion they captured the fort and massacred the English troops holding it. In this crisis Henry was in danger of his life and he owed his ultimate safety to his adoption by Wa-wa-tam. In his fascinating book, *Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories*, Henry tells the story of his relation with his strange brother. "Shortly after my first arrival at Michilimackinac, in the preceding year, a Chipeway, named 'Wa'-wa' tam', began to come often to my house, betraying, in his demeanour, strong marks of personal regard. After this

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had continued for some time, he came, on a certain day, bringing with him his whole family, and, at the same time, a large present, consisting of skins, sugar and dried meat. Having laid these in a heap, he commenced a speech in which he informed me, that some years before, he had observed a fast, devoting himself, according to the custom of his nation, to solitude, and to the mortification of his body, in the hope to obtain, from the Great Spirit, protection through all his days; that on this occasion, he had dreamed of adopting an Englishman, as his son, brother and friend; that from the moment in which he had first beheld me, he had recognized me as the person whom the Great Spirit had been pleased to point out to him for a brother; that he hoped that I would not refuse his present; and that he should forever regard me as one of his family.

"I could do no otherwise than accept the present, and declare my willingness to have so good a man, as this appeared to be, for my friend and brother. I offered a present in return for that which I had received, which Wawatam accepted, and then, thanking me for the favour which he said that I had rendered him, he left me, and soon after set out on his winter's hunt."

When the massacre of the English in the fort was being planned by the Indians, Wa-wa-tam came once and again to Henry and tried to persuade him to go with him to Sault Ste Marie—all without betraying the Indians' design. Henry, not perceiving the purpose of the plea, refused to go. "I turned a deaf ear to everything, leaving Wa-wa-tam and his wife, after long and patient but ineffectual efforts, to depart alone, with dejected countenances, and not before they had

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each let fall some tears." We cannot retail the thrilling story of the massacre and Henry's escape from immediate death, which, by the way, was largely due to the Indian woman slave of a French neighbour. When Henry was a prisoner in the hands of the Ottawas, who were considering the destiny to be meted out to him, Wa-wa-tam suddenly appeared upon the scene and managed to whisper to him "Take courage." At the council, Wa-wa-tam and his wife laid down many presents at the feet of the chiefs and addressed them. "Friends and relations You know what I feel. You all have friends and brothers and children, whom as yourselves, you love; and you—what would you experience, did you, like me, behold your dearest friend—your brother—in the condition of a slave; a slave, exposed every moment to insult, and to menaces of death? This case as you all know is mine. See there (*pointing to myself*) my friend and brother among slaves—himself a slave! He is my brother; and because I am your relation, he is therefore, your relation too—and how being your relation can he be your slave?" This appeal to the sentiment of the Indians was not in vain. The presiding chief replied, "My relation and brother, what you have spoken is the truth We accept your present; and you may take him home with you." Wa-wa-tam took Henry off for a long hunting trip on Lake Michigan and only brought him back when comparative quiet had been restored to Michilimackinac.

Let Henry describe his final parting from Wa-wa-tam. "We now exchanged farewells, with an emotion entirely reciprocal. I did not quit the lodge without the most grateful sense of the many acts of goodness which I had experienc-

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ed in it, not without the sincerest respect for the virtues which I had witnessed among its members. All the family accompanied me to the beach; and the canoe had no sooner put off, than Wa-wa-tam commenced an address to the Ki' chi' Ma'ni' to' [the Great Spirit] beseeching him to take care of me, his brother, till we should next meet. This, he had told me, would not be long, as he intended to return to Michilimackinac for a short time only and would then follow me to the Sault. . . . We had proceeded to too great a distance to allow our hearing his voice before Wa-wa-tam had ceased to offer up his prayers."

Many such adoptions of white men by Indians are recorded in the subsequent generations. They helped to keep the relation between the White and the Red Man in our Canadian West sane and humane.

A White Indian

The stories of "Whites," adults and children, captured by the Indians—"Stories of Captivity" as they are called in the second-hand book catalogues—are always thrilling, but there is a monotony about them, for the experiences are essentially the same in every case. Moreover, their accounts of the Indians are necessarily of the most superficial. The story of the captivity of John Tanner, however, is unique in that he was carried off as a child and lived among the Indians till he forgot his mother tongue and, though white of skin, spoke and lived as an Indian. He even took the character and ways of the Red Man. Yet he came back in after years to his home and civilization and was fortunate

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in finding a kindly physician, Edwin James, who took down his story and published it under the title of the *Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*. This is now one of the rarest of our books on the Canadian North-West. It gives us a unique insight into the mentality of the Indian tribes who roamed between Lake Superior and the Red River and the Assiniboine.

What surprises one at the outset is the motive which led the savages to carry John Tanner off to live as one of themselves. A little band of Ottawas roamed about Lakes Huron and Superior, but had something like a village in the neighbourhood of Saginaw at the entrance to Lake Michigan. An old woman of the band had lost a favourite son. Nothing would console her but to secure a substitute. She sent her old husband and a surviving son off to capture a white boy who should satisfy her affection and, one surmises, who should work for her and support her in her old age. They journeyed by way of Lake Erie to a spot on the south bank of the River Ohio, opposite the mouth of the Big Maumee River. Here John Tanner, the father, occupied a clearing on the frontier line between the White and the Red Men. The restlessness of his horses told him that Indians were lurking near by, and he cautioned his son John to keep to the compound, but boys will be boys; the little lad went out to gather nuts under a tree and was carried off.

When old Manito-o-géezhik brought the boy to Saginaw to his wife, she received him with tears, hugging him and kissing him, and led him into the tipi. Next day the ceremonial reception of the white lad into the band took place. "They took me to the place where the old woman's son had

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been buried. The grave was enclosed with pickets, in the manner of Indians, and on each side of it was a smooth open place. Here they all took their seats; the family and friends of Manito-o-geezhik on the one side, and strangers on the other. The friends of the family had come provided with presents; mukkuks of sugar, sacks of corn, beads, shrouding, tobacco, and the like. They had not been long assembled, when my party began to dance, dragging me with them about the grave." The name they gave him was Shaw-shaw-wa-nebase (The Falcon).

Little John Tanner's life with the band was far from happy. His new mother and sisters treated him with kindness, but he did not fit into the life of his strange relatives. He did not know how to handle the canoe when they were fishing; he could not make snares properly to catch deer. So they beat him, insulted him, and even deliberately underfed him. Once they took him out in the canoe to meet some white traders, apparently up from Montreal in the fur trade. These passers-by pitied the lad and gave him bread and apples and other presents, but did nothing to rescue him. His relatives took all the presents, leaving him but one apple by way of consolation.

Fortune soon changed, however, for an Ottawa squaw, Net-no-kwa by name, who held a position with her band not easily distinguished from that of a chieftain, made an offer for the lad. She had lost a son about his age by death, and she yearned for him as a substitute. Tanner's Indian mother protested. "My son has been dead once, and has been restored to me; I cannot lose him again." Net-no-kwa, however, was a masterful woman and knew Indian nature. She

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brought blankets, tobacco, and other presents of great value, but above all a ten-gallon keg of irresistible rum. When all had reached the genial stage of drunkenness, the bargain was completed, and the Ottawa chieftainess paddled off with her new son. A genuine affection grew up between the Falcon (John Tanner) and his new mother. They wandered, as would appear to the white man, aimlessly to and fro between Lake Superior, the Lake of the Woods, Red River, and along the Assiniboine as far as Red Deer River in the neighbourhood of our Hudson's Bay Junction, and it is Tanner's experiences among the Indians of our prairies and at the fur-traders' forts, which make his narrative of so much interest for the history of the North-West.

Daniel Harmon of the North-West Company fell in with Tanner at Fort Alexandria, on the upper Assiniboine west of Fort Pelly, on July 9, 1801, and made this entry in his journal. "This day there came here an American that, when a small child, was taken from his parents, who then resided in the Illinois country. He was kidnapped by the Sauteux, with whom he has resided ever since; and he speaks no other language excepting theirs. He is now about twenty years of age, and is regarded as a chief among that tribe. He dislikes to hear people speak to him respecting his white relations; and in every respect excepting his colour he resembles the savages with whom he resides. He is said to be an excellent hunter. He remains with an old woman who, soon after he was taken from his relations, adopted him into her family; and they appear to be mutually as fond of each other, as if they were mother and son."

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Perhaps there is not as much in mother's love as the sentimental Teutonic people would have us believe. We do what society and custom bid us, and, if convention commanded us to love our old aunties as if they were mothers, we probably would do so. At any rate the affection which grew up between adopted relations in the world of the Red Men seems to lead to this conclusion.

Indian Courtship

When John Tanner grew up, he became a great hunter and provided the tipi with its meat and with furs to trade at the fur-forts for clothing, guns, and ammunition, and above all for those kegs of rum in which the Red Men forgot all the sorrows and tribulations of their life of wandering. On her side Net-no-kwa, his mother, skinned the animals to make clothing and pounded the meat to make the pemmican, and did for her son all that an Indian mother was expected to do. It was, of course, her duty, too, to see that he got the right kind of wife who would do all this for him with industry, and, as Indian custom required, without complaint. This was an easy task for Net-no-kwa, for The Falcon, as John Tanner was called, was a great hunter and there was food in his tipi, when elsewhere there was a scene of fasting and even starvation. Fathers and mothers with daughters to marry set their eyes with envy on the old woman's son. Accordingly she approached a powerful chief who had an altogether suitable daughter, and the two in Indian fashion arranged it all between themselves. The episode is best told in Tanner's own words.

"Presently she took me to one side, and began to say to me, 'My son, you see that I am now become old. I am scarce

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able to make your moccasins, to dress and preserve all your skins, and do all that is needful about your lodge. You are now about taking your place as a man and a hunter, and it is right you should have some one who is young and strong, to look after your property, and take care of your lodge. Wa-ge-tote, who is a good man, and one respected by all the Indians, will give you his daughter. You will thus gain a powerful friend and protector, who will be able to assist us in times of difficulty, and I shall be relieved from much anxiety and care for our family.' Much more she said in the same strain; but I told her, without hesitation, that I would not comply with her request. I had as yet thought little of marriage among the Indians, still thinking I should return before I became old, to marry to the whites. At all events, I assured her I could not now marry the woman she proposed to me. She still insisted that I must take her, stating that the whole affair had been settled between Wa-ge-tote and herself, and that the young woman had said she was not disinclined to the match, and she pretended she could do no otherwise than bring her to the lodge. I told her if she did so I should not treat or consider her as my wife. The affair was in this situation the morning but one before we were to separate from Wa-ge-tote and all his band, and, without coming to any better understanding with the old woman, I took my gun early in the morning, and went to hunt elk. In the course of the day I killed a fat buck, and returning late in the evening, I hung up the meat I had brought before the lodge, and carefully reconnoitered the inside before I entered, intending, if the young woman was there, to go to some other lodge and sleep; but I could see

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nothing of her. Next morning Wa-ge-tote came to my lodge to see me; he expressed all the interest in me which he had been in the habit of doing, and gave me much friendly advice, and many good wishes. After this Net-no-kwa returned again, urging me to marry the daughter, but I did not consent."

Evidently there was something of the Anglo-Saxon still left in John Tanner. This comes out in the way in which he found his wife to the great scandal of the village, and to the grief of his old mother.

"I was standing by our lodge one evening, when I saw a good looking young woman walking about and smoking. She noticed me from time to time, and at last came up and asked me to smoke with her. I answered, that I never smoked. 'You do not wish to touch my pipe; for that reason you will not smoke with me.' I took her pipe and smoked a little, though I had not been in the habit of smoking before, and I began to be pleased with her. After this we saw each other often, and I became gradually attached to her. My conversations with Mis-kwa-bun-o-kwa (The Red Sky of the Morning), for such was the name of the woman who offered me her pipe, was soon noised about the village. Hearing it, and inferring, probably, that like other young men of my age, I was thinking of taking a wife, old O-zhusk-koo-koon came one day to our lodge, leading by the hand another of his numerous grand-daughters. 'This', said he, to Net-no-kwa, 'is the handsomest and the best of all my descendants; I come to offer her to your son.' So saying, he left her in the lodge and went away. This young woman was one Net-no-kwa had always treated with un-

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usual kindness, and she was considered one of the most desirable in the band." It must have been a grievous disappointment to the Indian mother's heart of Net-no-kwa to be deprived of the pleasure of finding a wife for her son, but wise old woman that she was, she joined with him in giving the would-be bride a fine lot of presents with which she went away happy. Net-no-kwa received "The Red Sky of the Morning" with a mother's grace into the family tipi. No wonder Tanner ends the narrative of the episode: "There are many of the Indians who throw away and neglect their old people; but though Net-no-kwa was so decrepit and infirm, I felt the strongest regard for her and continued to do so while she lived."

Fur-Traders' Squaws

Indian marriage was in no sense the sentimental thing the romanticists have made it for the Teutonic peoples. The parents on either side arranged the match and what presents were to be given, and then broke the news to the young couple. These took it, shall we say, with the Red Man's fortitude. When an Indian chief took up the problem of marrying his daughter, he judged the eligibility of the possible son-in-law by his ability to hunt for the whole family circle, and by the presents the prospective bridegroom could put on the counter. If there were a fur-trader's fort in the neighborhood, the chief would regard the wintering-partner or proprietor as the most desirable of all possible sons-in-law. Not only would his daughter become the chief lady of the post, living in rude splendour in the centre shack of the fort, but her family could count on being

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fed and clothed in time of scarcity, and would, from time to time, be allowed to see the inside of the rum-keg,—the acme of happiness, this, surely. Accordingly, the proprietors received many proposals from fond fathers of presentable maidens—all the oftener as they (the traders) would not wish to offend the would-be father-in-law, and would take away the edge of their refusal by a few presents and an outpouring of rum. Alexander Henry, the elder, says "Old Buffalo, brought me his eldest daughter . . . and insisted on my taking her for a wife, in hopes I would give him a keg of liquor, but I declined the offer. I gave him and each of his brethren a dram and sent them to their cabin." On news of this another Indian speedily proposed his daughter and, probably, attained his object, when, after the refusal, the rum was passed round once more.

From the point of view of matrimony the fur-trader's position was not an easy one. He usually came of good connections in Montreal or England and could not consider asking a white lady to endure the hardships of the Upper Country or to live with him in the gross surroundings of his post. The only alternative in the early days before there were half-breed girls was a squaw. Nor were the native women to be despised in that barbarous world, for men held everything save hunting in contempt, and would not touch work of any kind. That was for the squaws, and every squaw busied herself with her husband's chores, disembowelling and skinning the buffalo, pounding the meat, making moccasins, and doing all sorts of other pleasant tasks, including carrying the tipi as they moved from place to place. The fur-traders found the squaws most excellent wives. They were

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brought up to work, and not complain; they even expected to be beaten if disobedient, and probably would despise a husband who could not lord it over them and chastise them on occasion. Finally, if a fur-trader accepted a chief's daughter as his wife, he would bring to his post the whole trade of the band. Of course, the wife's family might become troublesome with their demand for presents and their unquenchable thirst for rum. Not many traders were as lucky as Alexander Henry, the younger, for the father and mother of "Her Ladyship" as he called his squaw, were killed off by the Sioux shortly after he formed his connection with them.

In due time there were half-breed girls whom the fur-traders might marry, as did Daniel Harmon, but with these also it was a marriage arranged. Harmon in 1805 was at a post on a beautiful flat of the South Saskatchewan, about one-third of a mile above the St. Laurent ferry near Duck Lake, Saskatchewan.

"Thursday, October 10. This day, a Canadian's daughter, a girl of about fourteen years of age, was offered to me; and after mature consideration, concerning the step which I ought to take, I have finally concluded to accept of her as it is customary for all gentlemen who remain, for any length of time, in this part of the world, to have a female companion, with whom they can pass their time socially and agreeably, than to live a lonely life, as they must do, if single. If we can live in harmony together, my intention now is, to keep her as long as I remain in this uncivilized part of the world; and when I return to my native land, I shall endeavour to place her under the protection of some honest man, with whom she can pass the remainder of her days in this coun-

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try, much more agreeably than it would be possible for her to do, were she to be taken down into the civilized world to the manners, customs and language of which she would be an entire stranger. Her mother is of the tribe of Snare Indians [an off-shoot of the Indians of Thompson River in British Columbia] whose country lies along the Rocky Mountain. The girl is said to have a mild disposition and an even temper, which are qualities very necessary to make an agreeable woman, and an affectionate partner."

Harmon did better by his "children's mother," as he calls her, than he planned. She, like most of the squaws and half-breed girls, made an excellent wife and mother, and, when the time came for him to retire from the Upper Country, he could not face the wrench to his feelings, which the abandonment of her and her children involved. He took her down to Montreal where was the nearest parson. There they were married in due form and retired with their children to Vermont.

There can be no doubt that the connections of many of the traders, informal in the eyes of the Whites, but perfectly formal and according to the customs of the natives, were happy. Alexander Henry took "Her Ladyship" and his children with him across the Rockies to the mouth of the Columbia, where, unfortunately, he was drowned. The kindly Roderick MacKenzie, Sir Alexander's cousin, took his squaw and offspring with him to settle at Terrebonne near Montreal. There, too, David Thompson, the famous geographer and explorer, made his home with his half-breed wife, Charlotte Small.



Red Lake Chief and some of his following arriving
at the Red River and visiting the Governor

W Day Lith.

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The Half-Breeds

The attitude taken by the fur-traders from Montreal towards the Indians and, particularly, towards the squaws, was very different from that assumed by the men of the Hudson's Bay Company. They followed the tradition of their French predecessors who took them into their intimate friendship and admitted them to their fort. This was all the more natural for the men from Montreal, because nearly all their servants were French-Canadian *voyageurs*, who freely took the squaws for wives. Indeed, it was the practice of the men from Montreal to have the squaw-wives and half-breed children of their servants supported at the expense of the post. So also the squaw and family of the wintering-partner, in command of the fort. These intimate relations of officers and men kept the post in the most friendly relation with the savages, protected them from hostile attacks, and brought in the business of the tribes connected by marriage with the post. Besides, there was constant need for moccasins, for coats made of moose skins, for snow-shoes, and the like, and the women of the post busied themselves making these, plain or beautifully ornamented. As the half-breed children grew up they found a real place for themselves in the business of the post—the boys as messengers, hunters, and *voyageurs*, and the girls as the wives of the officers and men.

We must not assume the superior attitude of the Anglo-Saxon and look down on the half-breeds. Of course, there were all kinds of them, as there are all sorts of White Men, good, bad, and indifferent. Taken as a whole the half-breeds formed a middle class in these days, above the natives and below the White Men. As such they were respected by

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all. In particular, the children of the officers, brought up in the home of their white fathers, often educated by them, as Daniel Harmon's children were, proved capable of taking positions of great usefulness in the service of the forts.

The Hudson's Bay Company took a different view of relations with the natives. They did not wish their men to be too intimate with them, and would not allow the Indians a free entrance to their forts on the Bay. These forts were factories in the modern sense of the word. Out of the iron sent out, the blacksmith made the iron implements which figured in the trade; out of the whole cloth the tailor made clothing for the servants and for the natives. If the Indians were allowed to roam at will about the fort, the blacksmith, the tailor, and other servants, would use their position and the Company's goods to carry on a clandestine trade, and would send the furs home secretly by the ships. Therefore, none was allowed to have close relations with the Indians but the Factor and the storekeeper, who dealt with them through a window in the shop, or even in the palisade. The Company issued particular orders that women should on no account be admitted to the fort, lest their husbands become suspicious and jealous, and perpetrate acts of violence in fits of anger. In this policy the Company was wise, for it kept their servants in happy relations with the natives. When York Fort, as Fort Bourbon, was in the possession of the French, six Frenchmen were killed because of the jealousy of Indian husbands. The English at York Fort never had any misfortune of that kind.

If the servants of the Company took squaws and had children they had to support them out of their own earnings.

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When they left the country they were required to make proper arrangements for the care of their half-breed children, usually with their Indian relatives. Matthew Cocking, after retiring from the service sent out money every year for his children; on his death, the payments continued to be made by the executors of his will. When the Company built forts in the interior, their rules were not observed strictly, and the practices of the traders from Montreal came in.

One of the most honourable chapters in the history of the Company is the story of its dealings with the half-breeds after the union of 1821. Every second fort had to be closed and a crowd of half-breeds with no means of support but their labour were thrown out of employment. Land was allocated to them in Lord Selkirk's colony, and money was set aside for their houses, and for seed for their sowing. A residential school was kept up for a time to educate the half-breed children, boys and girls. Missionaries, Catholic and Anglican, were secured to care for their conduct and to open schools. Many of the half-breeds' children did not value education any more than some of our own Canadian boys and girls, but a number did, and in the course of time we find English and French half-breeds appointed to represent their districts in the Council which governed the colony. Such half-breeds constituted a very respectable middle class in the community.

When the Canadians began to come to the colony they failed to understand the place of honour held by many of the half-breeds. They put on superior airs and looked down on them. The poet, Charles Mair, sent out in the employ of the Canadian Government, wrote letters to his friends in

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Toronto criticizing and laughing at the half-breed ladies. These got into the columns of the *Globe*, and were of course read in the Red River Settlement. Naturally, the half-breeds were indignant. Two half-breed ladies rather proved Mair's statements to be true. When he came to call on them, one pulled his nose and the other boxed his ears. Governor Mactavish was especially indignant, for his wife was a well-educated and cultured half-breed lady. At a dinner party he indignantly asserted that her manners would grace any gentleman's table. We should not be misled by the names, such as half-breed, by which people are called, nor even by the blood in their veins. What matters is what they are, and what we are in ourselves.

John Cole, a Rough Customer

In the matter of happy relations with the Indians there were fur-traders—and fur-traders. An illustration of the bad type will not be out of place. There can be no doubt that a considerable number of those traders, who rushed into the North-West after the conquest of Canada, were well described in a letter written by William Tomison, Chief Inland of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Saskatchewan, to be delivered to the Governor-General of Canada, in the hope that he would take steps to control the traffic in rum: "It grieves us to see a Body of Indians destroyed by a set of Men merely for self Interest, doing all in their Power to Destroy Posterity, so we hope that your Excellency will make such regulations as will preserve Posterity and not be Destroyed by fiery double Distilled Rum from Canada." Of the worst type was William Bruce who treated the savages so ill and

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roused such deep resentment that he could not be placed in any one fort longer than for a single trading season. In 1780 he was attacked by the natives at his post, Fort aux Trembles on the Assiniboine River, not far west of Portage la Prairie. He managed to escape downstream with most of his men, but not without abandoning his dead. He spent the winter at the Forks where the City of Winnipeg now stands. The Indians got even with him in a strange way. He was one of the few traders to whom they passed on the small-pox. Within a twelvemonth he was dead.

Of the same kind was John Cole, after whom Cole's Falls below Prince Albert, were named. It has been seen that he was with Thomas Corry at Cedar Lake in 1772, and that Corry accused him of robbing him and running away. Cole then entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, but soon gave his new employers the slip. In the trading season of 1778-9 he was in the employ of Peter Pangman in a fort at the Eagle Hills, below Battleford. A cellar on the left bank of the North Saskatchewan about ten miles below the mouth of Battle River may mark its site. It is at a beautiful spot on a "low bottom" of the river opposite the Eagle Hills, where they sweep away from the river westward. Behind the fort the outer bank of the river rises by a steep incline to the prairie level on which the town of Denholm, Saskatchewan, now stands. Several different Pedlars had come in, each in his own interest, but they found it wise to pool their goods and occupy Pangman's fort, as if they were a single party. Cole represented Pangman, and a man named Gebosh, represented a Swiss trader named Waden. Here also rum was the chief article of trade.

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Indians sober were fine fellows, but Indians drunk were turbulent and quarrelsome. At Pangman's fort the traders had a supply of laudanum with which to doctor the rum given to troublesome Indians, and so to put an end to their quarrelsomeness by putting them to sleep. In the autumn a drunken Indian chief was giving much trouble, so Cole gave him a liberal portion of laudanum in his rum. Gebosh, not knowing this, gave him another dose, with the result that the chief ceased from troubling and went to the Red Sand Hills to which all Indians go after this fleeting life. Naturally, the tribe blamed the traders for the death of its chief. It brooded over the wrong throughout the winter and came in with its furs in the spring determined to revenge. Another cause for revenge was that one of the traders, Charles McCormack, in a fit of anger had cut up one of their tents into strips with his dagger. An old Indian, who was friendly to the traders, came to the fort and began warning the men of their danger, but was told that he was nothing but an old woman, and John Cole told him that, if he went on croaking, they would cut his tongue out of his mouth. In high dudgeon, the old man went up the hill back of the fort and egged on the conspirators to revenge.

Meanwhile the traders, all unconscious of their peril, were busy packing their furs and goods to leave for Grand Portage on Lake Superior. The Indians came down in what appeared to be a peaceful manner. Suddenly a savage shot Cole, and all parties flew to arms. From the hill at the back of the fort the Indians kept sniping at the traders, who replied from the corners of their houses. It suggests that the In-

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dians were getting the better of it, that the traders retired into their houses. Two servants, an Englishman and a Scotsman, however, kept up the firing, but, finally, raised a white flag for parley. The terms of the armistice were dictated by the Indians. All the goods and all the rum were surrendered to them. The traders were allowed to go off with their lives and at least a portion of their furs.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie frankly lays the blame for this fracas and that at Bruce's post on the Assiniboine, on the traders and their violent and unscrupulous dealings with the natives. The fur-traders, as a whole, came to the conclusion that there was a conspiracy to drive them out of the country. They regarded the epidemic of small-pox, which came immediately after these incidents, and swept away probably more than a third of the native population, and broke the spirit of the survivors, as a providential deliverance.

The Perils of the Gun-Traffic on the Saskatchewan, 1794

The fur-traders found the Saskatchewan the most perilous of all their departments, for it brought them face to face with the great tribes of the plains, for example, the Blackfeet. What made things worse was that these large tribes out on the prairies had no precious furs with which to trade for the ammunition, which they sought eagerly because it gave them the advantage over their enemies. They had only wolf-skins and foxes—the cheapest of furs—while their enemies to the north, the Crees, brought in precious beaver skins and got all the ammunition they needed. Thus, while the proud tribes of the plains had the advantage of numbers, the Crees were the more powerfully armed.

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In the earliest times the tribe which roamed about the South Saskatchewan and in the neighbourhood of Saskatoon was the Big Bellies or Gros Ventres. They got their name not because they were corpulent, for they were the handsomest of Indians, but because the sign for the tribe was a gesture over the stomach, which seemed to the traders to suggest aldermanic proportions. They were also called Rapid or Fall Indians, because the traders met them at the falls at Nipawin and at Cole's Falls near Prince Albert. By the end of the eighteenth century they had been driven across the South Saskatchewan and were still suffering defeat at the hands of the well armed Crees. In 1793 a party was surprised by the enemy near the Moose Woods south of Saskatoon, and was shot down to the last man, woman, and child. This tragedy led the Gros Ventres to attack the traders' forts, partly out of revenge, partly to equip themselves with ammunition. The favourable time was the summer when the traders and their crews were away, taking the furs to the east and only a few hands were on guard over the posts.

In July 1794 there were two forts 1000 paces apart on the banks of the South Saskatchewan, about six miles north of St. Laurent. As you drive along today on the east side of the river you pass over a wooded ridge and descend to a fine stretch of wheat field to the right and to the left. The ruins of the Hudson's Bay Company's post may still be seen by the river—a cellar with its chimney-remains in the woods and a second in the wheat field. The post of the rival North-West Company was on the other side of the river where was Gardepu's Crossing, famous in the 1885 Rebellion. Its ruins are in the Forest Reserve through which the Saskatoon-Mc-

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Dowall-Prince Albert highway runs, little more than two miles away on the right. The Gros Ventres decided to attack these two forts, apparently simultaneously. Fortunately for the North-West Company's post, Jacques Raphael, the interpreter, was out riding and came upon the savages. He rode back full-speed to the fort, followed by five or six Indian cavaliers. The garrison, four French-Canadians and five Crees, locked the gates, manned the bastions, and stood to the defence. Fortunately the ammunition of the Gros Ventres was soon exhausted. Their fearless war-chief, L'Homme de Callumet, now called for a frontal attack, but as he led his men forward, he was stretched by a bullet breathless on the ground. The band forthwith retired, sorrowfully bearing his body with them.

The savages succeeded better with the Hudson's Bay Company's post. The Englishmen were out for a walk. They saw the Indians coming and were warned by their interpreter that they were on the war-path, but, as sometimes happens with Englishmen, they were impervious to advice. "Mistaking the Gros Ventres for Assiniboins they advanced to meet them without the least apprehension of danger 'till at length they were surrounded and fell the victims of their incredulity The savages finding no resistance broke into the fort and began a scene full of horror and destruction. After they became masters of the booty which amounted to 60 or 70 pieces (packs of 90 pounds each) they made diligent search for the unfortunate people, butchered every soul that came in their way in a most inhuman manner; even the women and children did not escape Mr. Vandriel was the only person that escaped the general carnage. He was lucky

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enough to secure himself amongst a heap of rubbish which was overlooked by the Barbarians, but at length being surrounded by the flames he was compelled to abandon his asylum and rushing through the fire, the smoke favoured his escape to the riverside, where he threw himself into a small canoe and committed it to the mercy of the current which carried him out of danger."

Not long since a party from the University of Saskatchewan led by Father Myre of Batoche stood by the ruins of this post. The marks of fire can still be seen upon the stones, which were the foundation of the mud chimneys. Here, as long ago as three years after the Province of Upper Canada was established, in what is now a beautiful wheat field, the soil was stained with the blood of Magnus Annel, Hugh Brough, and William Fea. These Englishmen, like La Vérendrye's son, paid the penalty of the traffic in arms.

How to Shoot Indians

The fur-traders were but a small group of adventurous white men amid the hordes of the Indians. Scattered in different parts of the wide west they had, of sheer necessity, to become masters of the subtle art of managing the savages. It is true that the Indians of the great forest to the north of the prairies were never a menace to the traders, for the White Man's guns and ammunition, and his iron implements, enabled them to kill caribou and moose and to "work" beaver, and, thus, to have a more ample food supply than they could procure with their own ineffective implements. The Indian of the north was always the traders' friend. The great tribes on the prairies, especially the Blackfeet, were

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much more of a standing danger, but even they had their reasons for welcoming the traders to their country. Their chief sports were horse-stealing and war. With a fur-post in their midst they had a market for their horses and got in return the guns and ammunition, with which to take the war-path against the age-long enemies of their tribe. It was on the Pacific Coast that the real danger lay. The abundant food supply afforded by the sea and the rivers in the form of fish, and especially salmon, enabled them to live in great villages. Their concentrated numbers gave them the courage to face the White Man and even to attack him in his forts. Scarcely a post was established without an initial clash with its savage neighbours. As a natural consequence, it is on the Pacific coast that we see the art of handling the Indians at its best. Every device was used to appease and to control them. Often there was nothing to do but to shoot. One marvels at the inerrant judgement of the traders, by which they knew when to shoot and when not to shoot, and finally how to shoot. As illustration let us take the clash with the Indians at Fort Victoria shortly after it was established.

Readers who know Victoria can envisage the scene. On the opposite side of the cove from the wharf at which the Vancouver boats dock stood Fort Victoria. Its site was just east of the present post-office. Roderick Finlayson was in charge. He was skilled beyond the usual Hudson's Bay Company's officer in interpreting the character of the Indians and in the devices by which to control them. Some savages had stolen oxen and horses from the pasture outside of the



Sauteaux Indian travelling in winter with his family near Lake Winnipeg

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palisades. Finlayson called the chiefs to a parley and demanded the surrender of the culprit for punishment, or the payment in furs of a sum equal to the wrong done. The Indians broke away from the council defiant. They sent word through the region for the tribes to gather for the attack on the fort. Let Finlayson now tell the story for himself. "In the meantime I kept all hands at arms and set watches night and day to prevent surprise. After a couple of days of vain negotiations, when a large number assembled, they opened fire first upon the fort, riddling the stockades and roofs of the houses with their musket balls; it was with the greatest difficulty that I could prevail on our men not to return the fire, but wait for my orders. After a close firing of about half an hour was carried on, I spoke to the Principal Chief, informing him that I was fully prepared to carry on the battle, but did not like to kill any of them without explaining to them that they were wrong and giving them another chance of making restitution. A parley ensued among them, during which I sent our Indian Interpreter out to speak to them, telling him to make it appear that he escaped without orders and to point out to them the Lodge I was determined to fire on and for all its inmates to clear out. This they did at the suggestion of the Interpreter, who upon making a sign to me, as agreed upon that the Lodge was clear, was admitted to the fort by a back gate. Seeing that there was no sign of their coming to terms, I pointed one of our nine pounder cannon-ades loaded with grape shot on the Lodge, which was a large one built with cedar boards, fired, the effect of which was that it was completely demolished, the splinters of the cedar

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boards flying in fragments in the air. After this there was an immense howling among them from which I supposed a number had been killed. But my plan, I was happy to find, had the desired effect. I was aware that these Indians had never seen the effect of grape shot fired from cannons."

Finlayson now called a parley. Two hostages were sent out from the fort as two chiefs entered to make terms. It was agreed that payment should be made for the beasts that had been killed, and the pipe of peace was passed round.

"The chiefs next day wanted to see more of the effects of our big guns in an amicable way. I told them to place an old canoe in the harbour, that I would fire on it and then they would see the effect. So they did. I then loaded one of the guns with cannon ball, pointed it at the canoe in the harbour and fired; the ball passed through it, and bounded over the harbour afterwards into the woods beyond. This news spread far and wide and had a very salutary effect on them."

It was due to Finlayson's knowledge of Indian character, to his coolness in the hour of conflict, and, we may add, to his love of a joke, that the foundation of the capital of Canada's western-most province was laid in peace, and not in bloodshed. Finlayson knew how to shoot Indians.

CHAPTER VI.

The Fur-Traders and Their World

The Voyageurs

Washington Irving in his characteristic style gives a colourful picture of the voyageurs, as the French-Canadians who manned the brigades of canoes of the North-West Company were called. "No men are more submissive to their leaders and employers, more capable of enduring hardship, or more good humoured under privations. Never are they so happy as when on long and rough expeditions, toiling up rivers or coasting lakes; encamping at night on the borders, gossiping round their fires, and bivouacking in the open air. They are dexterous boatmen, vigorous and adroit with the oar and paddle, and will row from morning unto night without a murmur. The steersman often sings an old traditionary French song, with some regular burden in which they all join, keeping time with their oars; if at any time they flag in spirits or relax in exertion, it is but necessary to strike up a song of the kind to put them all in fresh spirits and activity. The Canadian waters are vocal with these little French *chansons* that have been echoed from mouth to mouth and transmitted from father to son, from the earliest days of the colony; and it has a pleasing effect, in a still golden summer evening, to see a bateau gliding across the bosom of a lake and dipping its oars to the cadence of these quaint old ditties, or sweeping along, in full chorus, on a bright sunny morning, down the transparent current of one of the Canadian rivers."

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Substitute the canoe and paddles for the boat and oars, and you have the voyageurs who frequented the waters of the tortuous Assiniboine or the lordly Saskatchewan. All their voyaging was not as poetic as our picturesque writer would suggest. True, it must have been "grand and glorious" paddling down the Saskatchewan swollen to its banks by the spring flood, but it was a different song "tracking" up against the current from twenty odd miles below Nipawin to about the same distance below Prince Albert, or poling up the swifter stretches on the way up to Fort Augustus, the Company's post over against the Hudson's Bay Company's Edmonton House.

A part of the long journey to and from Fort William, which the voyageurs cursed and even feared, both going and coming, was the Winnipeg River. Sir Alexander Mackenzie says of a stretch known as the White River, from the foam of its cascades, that there were "seven portages in so short a space that the whole are discernible at the same moment." We hear of much tribulation and many hair-breadth escapes and even accidents in this perilous river, but the voyageurs took it all, even death itself as a matter of course. Here is an account given by Alexander Henry, the younger, of his passage down Portage de l'Isle (Island Portage) in 1800.

"One of my canoes, to avoid the trouble of making this portage [that is carrying goods and canoe overland] passed down near the north shore with a full load. As my own canoe was soon over the portage, we loaded and embarked, and on pushing from shore I perceived the canoe on the north side coming off to shoot the rapids. She had not gone many yards when, by some mismanagement of the

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foreman, the current bore down her bow full upon the shore, against a rock, upon which the fellow, taking advantage of his situation, jumped whilst the current swirled the canoe around. The steersman, finding himself within reach of the shore, jumped upon the rock with one of the midmen; the other midman, not being sufficiently active, remained in the canoe, which was instantly carried out and lost to view amongst the high waves. At length she appeared and stood perpendicular for a moment, when she sank down again, and I then perceived the man riding on a bale of dry goods in the midst of the waves. We made every exertion to get near him, and did not cease calling out to him to take courage and not let go his hold; but alas! he sank under a heavy swell, and when the bale arose the man appeared no more. At this time we were only a few yards from him, poor fellow! The whirlpool caught my canoe, and before we could get away she was half full of water. We then made all haste to get ashore, and afterward collected as many pieces [packages of 90 pounds weight] as we could find." Henry and his crew pursued their journey to all appearance with little or no more concern than train hands show when a passenger loses the train.

The Brigades of Canoes

The White Men who came to the West learned many lessons from the Red Men—how to build and to navigate the frail birch-bark canoes down the rapids of rivers, how to live on the products of the country, Indian corn, game, wild-rice, or pemmican, and finally, where to go for their furs. As one would expect of civilized men, they went far

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beyond their savage teachers in putting this knowledge in an organized way to use in serious business. Only so could they trade furs in Athabaska or the Upper Saskatchewan during the winter and take them by canoe to Montreal or to Hudson Bay to be shipped in the autumn to England. The organization was perfected by the North-West Company whose outlet was Montreal. First of all they created a series of provision depots, like so many coaling stations, at which the "brigades" of canoes, as they called them, from the different departments could rely on being provisioned on their post-haste journeys to and fro. On Lake Superior they had Grand Portage till about 1801 when, as it was south of the American border, they removed to our Fort William. Here the Indian corn from Detroit and Michilimackinac was stored. At the post hard by Rainy Lake rice was provided. At Fort Alexander near the mouth of the River Winnipeg, the pemmican of the Red River and Assiniboine was ready for all the in-coming brigades to take them to Lake Superior, or going out, to take them to their posts on the Assiniboine, or over Lake Winnipeg to the Saskatchewan, and towards the Churchill River. At Cumberland House on the Saskatchewan the pemmican, traded on the North Branch of that river, it might be with Crees and Assiniboines in the region of Prince Albert or with the Blackfeet tribes roaming between Edmonton and Calgary, was heaped up to carry the brigades on to their destination. Finally, pemmican of the Upper Saskatchewan was taken on sleds during the winter to Isle-à-la-Crosse to be at the service of the Churchill River and Athabaska brigades. It was a marvellously co-ordinated system of transportation.

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Not less wonderful was the endurance of the French-Canadian and half-breed servants who manned the canoes. They left Athabaska at the breaking up of the ice and reached Rainy Lake or even Fort William in July, in time to send the furs down by the large canoes, which would arrive in Montreal by the Ottawa River in the first week in September. These men had physiques of iron. If well fed and favoured with a dram of rum—a *regale* as it was called—at certain fixed places, or after a specially hard day's journey, they would take almost anything in the way of toil or cold. They knew no fear of death. Duncan M'Gillivray in his Journal gives an interesting illustration of the extreme labour which they would endure, if only there were a little excitement about it. On the Athabaska and Saskatchewan brigades arriving at the mouth of the River Winnipeg, where they were to take their night's rest, the former brigade proudly challenged the Saskatchewan canoes to race the full length of Lake Winnipeg. As a result neither brigade camped for the night's rest, but began the race at once, this, although the Saskatchewan canoes were a quarter more heavily loaded than their opponents. To quote from McGillivray's Journal: "They entered the lake at sunset, the one animated with the expectation of victory and the other resolved, if possible not to be vanquished. They pursued the voyage with unremitting efforts without any considerable advantage on either side for 48 hours during which they did not once put ashore 'till at length, being entirely overcome with labour, they mutually agreed to camp . . . and cross the rest of the lake together . . . On the second night of the contest one of the steersmen being overpowered with sleep fell out of the stern of his canoe

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which being under sail advanced a considerable distance before the people could recover from the confusion that this accident occasioned; in the meantime the poor fellow almost sinking with the weight of his clothes cried out to two canoes that happened to pass within a few yards of him to save his life *pour l'amor de Dieu*; but neither the love of God nor of the blessed Virgin, whom he powerfully called to his assistance, had the least influence on his hard-hearted countrymen who paddled along with the greatest unconcern, and he must have certainly perished if his own canoe had not returned in time enough to prevent it."

Early Celebrations on the Saskatchewan

The fur-traders, Frenchmen, Englishmen, and Scots, brought their celebrations with them from their various homelands into the wilds of the West. As the Frenchmen were the first on the Saskatchewan, the first festivities observed naturally would be those in vogue in French and Catholic lands. They were the days of the patron saints of Canada and its Kings and Governors. La Vérendrye reports to Charles, Marquis of Beauharnois, Governor-General of New France and his chief, in the spring of 1736: "On the fourth of November I beat the general and made all the French and the savages at the fort [St. Charles, on Lake of the Woods] parade with arms to fire a *feu de joie* in honour of St. Charles your patron saint; every man fired three rounds. Then bombs were fired, the custom being to fire them off three times a year on the fête days of St. John, St. Louis [the day of King Louis' patron saint] and St. Charles [that of the Governor]."

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We have no record of any such celebrations among the meagre documents, which deal with the Saskatchewan, but we may argue that the fête of St. John, the patron saint of French Canada, did not pass unobserved. As La Corne's name was Louis, and his fort was St. Louis, bearing the King's name, we may argue that St. John's and St. Louis' were the earliest fête days on the Saskatchewan at Fort Pasquoyac, built in 1748 hard by The Pas, and at La Corne's post north of Kinistino, established about 1753.

The Englishmen came next. In 1754 Anthony Henday, a servant of the Hudson's Bay Company, came in from York Factory with Indians who had been down to the Bay to trade. He visited the French post at The Pas, came up the Carrot River where the party abandoned its canoes to drift at the rate of five or six miles a day, hunting and feasting, drumming and dancing, all the way across the prairies to within sight of the Rockies. After trapping north of the headwaters of the Red Deer River, Alberta, Henday moved north-eastward to the North Saskatchewan somewhere below Edmonton and passed down on the ice to a spot where the materials for making the birch-bark canoes, with which to return to the Bay, were to hand. This was somewhere in the neighbourhood of Fort Saskatchewan Settlement, Alberta. The entry in his Journal for April 23, 1755, runs: "Displayed my Flag in Honour of St. George; the leaders [chiefs] did the same after acquainting them and explaining the reason. In the Evening we had a grand feast with Dancing, Drumming, Talking [Speeches] etc." I like this picture of a lone Englishman, some 1300 miles from his nearest compatriot, determined on celebrating the day of the English patron saint,

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explaining it all to a council of Indian chiefs, who join with him in breaking the Union Jack upon the breezes of the Saskatchewan of 1755, and who make appropriate speeches in Cree, and, finally, give themselves up to drumming and dancing, in the circumstances the proper expression of joy for the day. Henday does not appear to have had any rum with him to enhance the festivity of the occasion.

It was not so with St. Andrew's day. By the time the Scotsmen came to the Saskatchewan from Montreal, the fur trade was in full swing, and rum was a staple article of trade. Though there had been celebrations of the day of the Scottish saint at an earlier date, our first record is for 1794. The scene was Fort George on the left bank of the North Saskatchewan, north and a little east of the present town of Vermilion, Alberta. Angus Shaw was the wintering partner in charge, and with him as his clerks were Duncan M'Gillivray and John MacDonald of Garth, needless to say Scotsmen. The entry in M'Gillivray's journal runs: "30th Nov. . . . This being St. Andrew's day the men observed the usual ceremony of presenting Bouquets (that is firing a *feu de joie*) to his Votaries, on which occasion Mr. Shaw gave them 6 Gallons Rum to divert themselves, which they did with a Vengeance, for one bottle succeeded another so quick that scarcely a man in the Fort escaped a Black eye." The chief participants in this festivity were Indian and French-Canadian employees. As the French-Canadians, though of the mildest disposition, are reported as being very quarrelsome when in drink, St. Andrew's Day at Fort George must have been of the liveliest.

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I cannot recall the presence of Irishmen on the Saskatchewan in these early days. Certainly there is no record of the celebration of St. Patrick's Day. The first Irishmen in the west came in as workmen and settlers to Lord Selkirk's Colony. Thus, the first celebration of St. Patrick's Day is to be found on the Red River, at Pembina by the International Boundary, whither the people resorted in the winter to live by the buffalo hunt. The entry in Governor Miles Macdonell's Journal for March 17, 1814, runs: "This being St. Patrick's Day I gave my people a little Rum in the evening."

It will be surmised that one holiday was much like another as celebrated in the fur-traders' forts, and New Year's like all the rest. The only variation was in the amount of fighting in which the men indulged when in drink. At Fort Alexandria in the Upper Assiniboine Daniel Harmon made this entry in his Journal, on January 2, 1801: "Yesterday, being the commencement of a New Year, our people, according to a Canadian custome which is to get drunk if possible, spent the day in drinking, and danced in the evening; but there was neither scratching nor fighting on this occasion."

The Gardens of the Fur-Traders

The Indians of the North-West were hunters and not given to agriculture. On the Barren Grounds and in the northern forests both climate and soil made anything like farms or even gardens impossible. In sharp contrast, the prairies could be brought under cultivation with the greatest

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of ease and with great promise of success, for there were no forests to be cut down and the soil is of the richest. Yet the Indians of the Canadian plains never planted a grain of corn till long after the White Men came into the country. They preferred the wild excitement of the buffalo hunt to the quiet joys of farming. It was human nature to do so. What healthy boy would go a-gardening when a cat hunt was possible in the next yard, or even at the other end of the town?

Agriculture was first introduced into the North-West by the Englishmen of the Hudson's Bay Company. On May 16, 1674, a minute of the Committee of the Company put it on record: "Ordered that there be provided . . . a bushel of wheat and rye, barley and oats, or a barrel of each in casks, and such sorts of garden seeds as the Governor shall advise." This offers presumptive evidence that the first attempt at farming in the West was on Hudson Bay, and there on James Bay in 1675. It was not the most promising part of the country to begin at, but it was the only part then known. I cannot recall any reference to a garden in Henry Kelsey's Journals. Joseph Robson told a committee of the House of Commons in 1749 that there were not two acres cultivated at York Factory and Fort Churchill combined. No wheat was grown, though Robson thought that if there had been any enterprise in the Hudson's Bay Company they could have made it grow. Carrots, radishes, and turnips, in fact all roots and greens, he asserted, grew to perfection.

When La Vérendrye penetrated inland from Lake Superior he brought seed of Indian corn with him and made his first garden in the interior of the North-West at Fort

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St. Charles, on "the North West Angle" of the Lake of the Woods. Indian corn and peas are mentioned. Indian corn was of great value to the fur-traders going south-west through Lake Michigan to the valley of the Mississippi, for it kept well and, when cooked with some fat, made a sustaining fare for the voyageurs on their long journeys, and it took up but a small space in the canoe. La Vérendrye probably found the North-West too cold for an assured crop of Indian corn. Moreover, dried buffalo meat afforded a cheap substitute with which to provision the canoes. At any rate we hear no more of Indian corn. Further, the conditions under which the fur trade with Montreal was conducted discouraged agriculture. The officer in command of a fort left in May with most, if not all, of his men to take the furs out to Lake Superior. The summer service at the fort was too small to do much farming. At any rate we hear no more about La Verendrye's attempts at agriculture.

Yet there were traders who sought to add variety to their diet by growing vegetables. Alexander Mackenzie says of the country west of Manitoba Lake: "The soil is good, and wherever any attempts have been made to raise esculent plants, etc., it has been found productive." And again: "In the fall of the year 1787, when I arrived at Athabaska, Mr. Pond was settled on the banks of the Elk [Athabaska] River, where he remained for three years, and had formed as fine a kitchen garden as I ever saw in Canada." And yet again: "In the summer of 1788, a small spot was cleared at the Old Establishment [on Peace River, near Fort Vermilion] . . . and was sown with turnips, carrots, and parsnips. The first grew to a large size, and the others thrived very well. An experiment

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was also made with potatoes and cabbage, the former of which were successful; but for want of care the latter failed."

The earliest gardening on the Saskatchewan was on the fine river-flat on which the Hudson's Bay Company's first Fort à la Corne stood, east of the Indian reserve and north of Kinistino.

Alexander Henry, the younger, passing the site of La Corne's post in September, 1808, made this entry in his Journal: "Some years ago were still to be seen remains of agricultural implements and carriage wheels. Their [the Frenchmen's] road to the plains is still to be seen, winding up a valley on the S. side." In verification of this is the fact that the Indians of the reservation call the spot Ne-chame-ka-gi-kanis, which is said to mean the place where we first saw vegetables grow. The first efforts at agriculture in Saskatchewan, were put forth at La Corne between 1753 and 1756. The first garden planted by Englishmen was at Hudson's House some thirty miles west of Prince Albert, where barley and cabbages were grown by the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, from about 1780.

We learn more about the gardens of the West from the Journals of Alexander Henry, the younger, than from any other source. In 1802 at Pembina, he planted potatoes, turnips, carrots, beets, parsnips, onions, and cabbage. On June 6 he transplanted 500 cabbage plants. Entries in his Journal show his returns: "Oct. 17: Snow. I took my vegetables up—300 large heads of cabbage, 8 bushels of carrots, 16 bushels of onions, 10 bushels of turnips, some beets, parsnips, etc.—20th I took in my potatoes—420 bushels, the produce of 7 bushels, exclusive of the quantity we have roasted since our

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arrival [from Lake Superior] and what the Indians have stolen, which must be at least 200 bushels more. I measured an onion, 22 inches in circumference; a carrot 18 inches long, and, at the thick end 14 inches in circumference; a turnip with its leaves weighed 25 pounds, and the leaves alone weighed 15 pounds. The common weight is 9 to 12 pounds without the leaves." I leave it to those who know more about agriculture than I do to judge whether Henry over-estimated the size of his crop or whether he is deliberately exaggerating.

When Henry came to the Saskatchewan in 1808 he continued his gardening. At his post, Fort Vermilion, opposite the river of that name and north of Kitscotty, Alberta, in 1809, he gathered 50 bushels of turnips "very large and of excellent quality" and but 80 bushels of potatoes "small and watery." The first mention of grain of any kind on the upper Saskatchewan is in Henry's Journal of September 3, 1810. The barley had failed at his own post, now at White Earth River, so he sent men to harvest the barley at old Fort Augustus at Edmonton. As we get farther into the nineteenth century we find the practice of having gardens and wheat and barley fields about the posts becoming more frequent. In 1814 at the North-West Company's Fort de la Montée, which stood on the north bank of the North Saskatchewan about three miles west of our Carlton Ferry, "there were cultivated fields around the house; the barley and peas seemed to promise an abundant harvest." Nor was the Hudson's Bay Company behind its rivals in this matter. There post Carlton House stood on the rich river-flat on the south side of the river at the foot of the outer lip of the valley. Its ruins can still be seen on either side of the road leading to the ferry.

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Of this post in 1820 Sir John Franklin says: "The land is fertile and produces, with little trouble, ample returns of wheat, barley, oats and potatoes." This is, I think, the first mention of wheat-growing in Saskatchewan.

Grasshoppers

Alexander Henry was interested in his gardens. Perhaps that is why the first mention of grasshoppers in our Western History is in his Journal. The date is August 17, 1800. Henry was returning from Grand Portage on Lake Superior, where he had handed over his furs to the agents of his fur-trading company and received the goods with which to carry on the next season's trade with the Indians. As he passed from Winnipeg River along to the shore of Winnipeg Lake towards Red River, he was struck by a northerly storm and forced to take refuge in a marsh. He describes the scene on the shore of the lake. "The beach was covered with grasshoppers, which had been thrown up by the waves and formed one continuous line as far as the eye could reach; in some places they lay six to nine inches deep, and in a state of putrefaction which occasioned a horrid stench." Manifestly there was a plague of grasshoppers on the Red River that year and a swarm flying over Lake Winnipeg had been caught by a storm and come to disaster.

The fur-traders were not agriculturists, and a grasshopper plague was no matter of concern to them, rather a phenomenon that aroused their interest, as a flight of geese might do. Accordingly, we have but few references to the pest. However, an entry in the Journal of Daniel Harmon of July 23, 1802, shows that the plague had by that date

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extended to Fort Alexandria on the upper Assiniboine River, about ten miles south-east of Sturgis, Saskatchewan. "There are at present, in this vicinity, grasshoppers, in such prodigious numbers, as I never before saw in any place. In fair weather, between eight and ten o'clock A. M., which is the only part of the day when many of them leave the ground, they are flying in such numbers, that they obscure the sun, like a light cloud passing over it. They also devour everything before them, leaving scarcely a leaf on the trees, or a blade of grass on the prairies, and our potato tops escape not their ravages."

I have found no other mention of grasshoppers until June 25, 1808, when Alexander Henry made an entry in his Journal at his post opposite the present town of Emerson, on the Red River at the International Boundary. "Swarms of grasshoppers have destroyed the greater part of the vegetables in my kitchen garden—onions, cabbages, melons, cucumbers, carrots, parsnips, and beets. They had also attacked the potatoes and corn, but these were strong enough at the root to sprout again. The swarms appear about the 15th of June, generally in clouds from the south and spread destruction; the very trees are stripped of their leaves. Grasshoppers pass northward until millions are drowned in Lake Winnipeg and cause a horrid stench, as I have already observed. They do not make such a formidable appearance every year."

If the plagues of grasshoppers were a matter of little concern to the fur-traders, it was far otherwise with Lord Selkirk's settlers on the Red River. His lordship's colony was dogged by misfortune from its very inception. It was twice

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destroyed by the minions of the North-West Company, who chose to look upon it as a device of the Hudson's Bay Company to drive them out of business. When Lord Selkirk arrived with a band of soldier settlers, it appeared that the colony would be safe from the depredations of man. When he left on September 9, 1817, a bountiful crop of wheat was standing almost ready for the harvest, but, sad to say, a severe frost on the very next day destroyed the crop. Only enough was saved to provide seed for next spring's sowing. Hope revived when the summer of 1818 promised a bountiful harvest, but misfortune again descended on the distressed colony—this time in the form of a grasshopper plague. Alexander Macdonell, Selkirk's agent, wrote to him on August 15: "I beg to say that upon the 2nd instant millions of grasshoppers invaded our crops, and ate up all our barley and potatoes, particularly those in the woods, not a vestige of them left, but all the potatoes more in the plains suffered very little injury. The barley has been eaten up everywhere. The grasshoppers have cut it off as clean as an axe would do, and the more green the worst they have done to it. I have, however, ordered all the people to collect the heads and more particularly those nearly ripe, by which the people will have a sufficiency of seed, but nothing for consumption. The wheat has not been injured in the least as yet, and we have a very heavy crop of it, which will be ready to cut down in 14 days after this, so that your lordship need not be uneasy but we shall get through (tho' different from what we expected.)" A later letter of Macdonell to Selkirk informs us that "only about 12 bushels of barley belonging to the Fort [farm] was saved and a more promising crop at one time I never saw."

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The wheat and potatoes were also materially injured. Bad as the situation was in 1818, it was immeasurably worse in the following summer.

The swarm of grasshoppers which descended upon the Red River Settlement on August 2nd 1818, devoured the garden crops and such barley as seems to have been planted somewhat late in the season. The wheat crop which was farther advanced escaped with comparatively slight damage. Not so the crops of 1819. Alexander Macdonell wrote his lordship in the autumn of that year: "The season was remarkably favourable for crops, but unfortunately the grasshoppers of last year left their eggs in the ground and upon its being turned up millions of them were seen. We continued our labour, however, to prepare to sow all we could. In the beginning of May the ground seemed all alive with these small vermin, though not much injury was done. Upon the 12th of May we had a fine appearance, when, all of a sudden, they increased to such a number and gained such strength that all the crop above the ground was eaten up so bare, that no vestige could be seen. At this time they could not fly, but kept on the ground, feeding and eating everything before them. The people were now very much alarmed, at the same time continuing their labour in expectation of their going away when they could fly. About the middle of July they began to fly in millions in a southern direction, still leaving those that were too young to fly, and these continued to destroy everything." Macdonell's highest expectation was to have enough seed for sowing in the spring. All lived in the hope that they would fly away before the next crop.

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Curiously enough, the grasshoppers had not laid eggs when they flew away. This they must have done in the surrounding country for they were plentiful there, while Red River Settlement was free. The settlers planted what little seed they had of their own and a consignment brought in from the valley of the Mississippi during the winter and everything grew luxuriously till July 26th, when the grasshoppers returned. They did not consume the wheat that was sown early and was well advanced, but such as was sown as late as June 5, and the late barley, and potatoes, were devoured. The summer of 1821 saw "the locusts" back in the Settlement again, and they were believed to be laying their eggs. The outlook for the next year was of the blackest. However, in his report of the summer Alexander Macdonell was able to write: "I am able to inform you with *certainty* that the grasshoppers have all left us, and there is no appearance of eggs as they have taken their flight in August without copulating, in consequence of which the people have turned up a great deal of land, so that next season will go on well." So ended the great plague which conferred on Alexander Macdonell, as distinguished from Miles Macdonell, the title of "the Grasshopper Governor." Ten years after the colony was founded it began life again with the various seeds left in hand after the devastations of the locusts.

For something more than forty years the Red River Settlement seems to have been free from the swarms of grasshoppers but in 1864 the plague was renewed. As eggs were laid, the devastation of the next year was great indeed. The depredations are thus described by *The Nor'Wester*, the first

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newspaper in the Canadian West: "Woe betide the grain fields in or near which the grasshoppers come down, for they stay till they devour everything of value, generally commencing the feast with the grain crops, not even thinking buckwheat beneath their notice, then passing on to the root crops and stuffing their hungry maws with potatoes, cabbages, onions, when particularly greedy including horse radish in their bill of fare, and winding up with a 'chew' of grass and herbs. We have been told that a young man, who was out hoeing potatoes happened to leave his coat for a couple of hours, and when he returned to pick it up he found it covered with grasshoppers, who had succeeded in eating a number of big holes in it." We leave it to the reader to decide whether the newspaper was exaggerating, or the habits of the young man were such as to make his coat, in parts at any rate, a particularly juicy meal. The crop of 1868 was wholly destroyed. Subscriptions were made in Britain, Canada, and the United States for the relief of the settlers. Thereafter the swarm of locusts disappeared as suddenly as it came.

The next plague came in 1874 and lasted till 1876 bringing a devastation no less complete. This visitation gains interest from its influence on the development of the country. Rupert's Land had been admitted into the Confederation, and the Dominion Government had gone far with the survey of Manitoba with a view to its settlement. Immigration agents had been sent out to Britain, to Europe, and to the United States. A great tide of immigrants was expected to set in, but all the efforts of the Dominion Government were brought to nought by those diminutive creatures, the locusts of the

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plains. The settlers refused to come to a land cursed with one of the plagues of Egypt.

If the grasshoppers thus damaged the country in more ways than one, they were a link in a concatenation of events which proved a great blessing to the land. They destroyed the crops so completely that seed had to be brought in from Minnesota, and Red Fife, the wheat which placed the North-West on the wheat map of the world, was introduced into the land. Red Fife matured early enough to give some assurance that the crop would be harvested before the early frosts of autumn. It is an ill wind that does not bring some good.

Sun-Dogs

The citizens of Saskatoon were surprised on the morning of April 16, 1931, to see a very unusual sky-effect created by the refraction of the light of the sun upon fine particles of ice floating in the atmosphere. Mr. B. W. Currie, M.Sc., Instructor in Physics in the University of Saskatchewan, has been good enough to give me the following statement about it: "The halo complex which was seen at Saskatoon on April 16 between 8.30 A.M. and 9.30 A.M. equalled in the number and brilliance of its rings and mock suns three historic halos, (1) the halo display which was seen at Rome in 1630; (2) the halo display at Danzig on 20th February 1661; and (3) the halo at St. Petersburg on 18th July 1794. A thin veil of high cirrus clouds covered the sky, but scarcely dimmed the light of the sun. Surrounding the sun was a brilliant rainbow coloured ring with the red next the sun. Still farther out were sections of a broader ring showing similar colour effects. Tangent to the smaller ring and directly above and below the

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sun were two coloured arcs curved down towards the horizon. A white horizontal ring parallel to the horizon passed through the sun and completely around the sky. Placed symmetrically on it with respect to a line passing through the sun and the zenith were no less than eight mock suns. Fainter arcs were also visible."

Such sky effects are rarely seen upon a major scale. It is a question whether any one living here had ever seen the like before, but that the phenomenon does occur from time to time in the West is proved by a description of one in 1795 by Duncan M'Gillivray, the clerk whose duty it was to keep the Journal of the North-West Company's Fort George on the North Saskatchewan, some twenty miles west of Frog Lake, and north of Vermilion, Alberta. Here is his account of the phenomenon as seen on February 17, 1795, 136 years ago: "The weather is unusually severe this Spring, and the Snow, which is generally dissolved about the middle of March, is hitherto entire and covered with a hard crust, which the heat of the sun has not yet been able to penetrate. In short all the oldest voyageurs agree that this is the latest season in their memory; a circumstance which some people ascribe to a curious phenomenon, which has frequently appeared in the Heavens for sometime past. The most remarkable one of this kind was observed on 27 Febry about noon, when the firmament around the sun was beautifully adorned with several circles of the colour of the Rainbow, intersecting each other in a curious manner: Parallel to the horizon was a large circle passing through the Centre of the sun and containing four luminous bodies resembling it: Two of these (one on each side of the sun) were intersected by a beautiful circle

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described around the sun as a centre and extending from the Horizon almost to the Zenith; and several other circles and semicircles were curiously disposed of in the several parts of the Southern Hemisphere. This appearance continued for near the Space of an hour & afterwards vanished away gradually.—Among many constructions put on this wonderful phenomenon, a few Canadians who are still attached to their Mother country make it ominous of the present situation of France, for, as the sun has dispersed and outshone these other luminaries, which seemed to rival it in brightness, so in like manner (they fondly presage) will France after a long struggle overcome and triumph over all her enemies.—For my own part I leave it entirely to those who can account for it in a more satisfactory manner than this, as it is probable that it has been observed at some other part of the Globe, where the operations of nature are more minutely remarked.” In this gloomy scientific age the sight of strange lights in the sky is simply noted, made a subject of conversation for a day, and forgotten. In contrast, Duncan M’Gillivray’s French-Canadians believed that the phenomenon was a prophecy of the rise of France again to glory and, doubtless, turned to their work with the joy and the laughter born of hopes as brilliant as the lights in the sky. However crazy their science may have been, it remains a fact that France did, “after a long struggle overcome and triumph over all her enemies.” Little more than seven months after the Frenchmen saw the portent in the sky at Fort George, Napoleon Bonaparte suppressed the insurrection of 15th Vendémiaire. Next year saw the brilliant victories of the French in Italy under his generalship. In

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little more than two years the French boundary was extended to the Rhine, and in a very few years Napoleon, master of France, had a large part of Europe at his feet.

We lose much happiness by viewing our heavenly phenomena according to the strictest canons of science. Think how many happy people there would be if, after an election disastrous to their views and leaving their party in eclipse, they had only to wait for the next sun-dogs to appear in the sky to have a sure prophecy that the struggle would soon be over and their party would "overcome and triumph over all its enemies." The bright colours of the sky as from the date of the sun-dogs would continue in their minds, illuminating them through a period of gloom which they had feared might be indefinitely long. The certainty of triumph of their party near at hand would release a fountain of joy in the hearts of the depressed, which would carry them easily through the struggle to the day of victory. While the politicians would be making their own interpretation of the portent of the sky, those who have lost their wealth in the crash of stocks, or in the cataclysmic fall of the wheat market, would be drawing their own conclusion. Instead of walking the streets with gloomy faces turned to the earth, their countenances, as from the date of the appearance of the sun-dogs, would be upward, looking to the sky, and illuminated by the knowledge that the world depression, which looked as if it would never pass, will soon be over, stocks will soon be rising, wheat soaring, and the good old days back among us. Unfortunately, science has made all this impossible. Accurate, but none the less gloomy, science has robbed the world of infinite happiness.

CHAPTER VII.

Fur-Traders From Montreal

The Frobishers, a Remarkable Family

The Frobishers never got a press either good or bad. They never wrote their own lives, and none ever thought of writing them. La Vérendrye sent in yearly reports of his proceedings to the Governor of Canada. He is accordingly remembered and placed on a pedestal. The Frobishers as a family have achievements to their credit as great as and even greater than those of La Vérendrye, but they kept no journals or at least none have survived. They are, therefore, largely forgotten. History will yet gather the facts together and show their greatness, for they gave shape to the development of the North-West, not only during their own time but for half a century afterwards.

The Frobishers were a Yorkshire family that came to Montreal when English colonists from the South and Englishmen and Scotsmen from across the sea were pushing into newly conquered Canada, in the hope of making a fortune in its trade, particularly in its fur trade. Benjamin Frobisher arrived in 1764 and within two years was deep in the commerce of the North-West. He secured goods, as was the custom of the time, on credit with interest to pay, sorted them in Montreal, and took them up to Michilimackinac, the western mart of the day, at the entrance of Lake Michigan. Here he met Frenchmen from the North-West and from the South-West, traded for furs and returned to Montreal to send consignments home to England to cover his indebtedness. Joseph and Thomas Frobisher, Benjamin's younger brothers were his

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partners. When the imperial trade regulations which had been a great protection to the Hudson's Bay Company were abolished in 1768, and Montreal merchants were allowed to enter Rupert's Land and the North-West, the younger brothers left Benjamin to care for the Montreal end of the partnership and pushed into the interior to build up a business machine, which should bring as large a portion of the furs of the North-West as might be into the control of the firm. That they already had gone far towards the solutions of the problems which they must face is shown by their proceedings. To do business far across the continent needed large capital. They, therefore, brought James McGill into a common venture with them. The transportation of furs from the forest belt of the north, where beaver abounded, to Lake Superior at Grand Portage, the point at which the 'winterers', that is gatherers of fur, would meet their partners from Montreal, constituted a very difficult problem. The Frobishers were ready with a solution. They established their own post on the Red River between Winnipeg and Selkirk, Manitoba, where they would gather such furs as they could, but would make sure of a supply of pemmican to bring their crews out through the desolate region between Lake Winnipeg and the rendezvous at Grand Portage.

McGill's 'winterer', Thomas Corry, went up to the Saskatchewan where it flows into Cedar Lake and built his post within a mile and a half of the site of La Vérendrye's Fort Bourbon. Here Corry was able to inflict as great an injury to the trade of the Hudson's Bay Company as La Vérendrye had done.

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The Indians from the fine fur-country west of Lake Winnipeg would pass through Winnipegosis and Cedar Lakes on their way to the Bay. They naturally stopped at Corry's post and traded all their furs, and the Hudson's Bay factor at York Factory looked for them in vain. But Corry could not bring his furs out to Grand Portage, for he could get no great store of provisions at Cedar Lake, where the staple food supply was only fish. Here the value of the Frobisher combination came in. Corry and the McGill side of the partnership had only to secure provisions to take them to the mouth of the Winnipeg River. There the Frobisher canoes would meet them with abundant pemmican from Fort Frobisher on the Red River. These arrangements were so successful in diverting the furs from the Bay to Montreal, that the Hudson's Bay Company had to give up their policy of inducing the Indians to take their furs to the seashore, and had to come into the interior to gather the furs in the Indians' own territory. As has been seen, in 1774 they sent in Samuel Hearne of the Coppermine fame to build a fort. He chose the site a mile east of the present Cumberland House, on an island south of which the Saskatchewan flowed, while the route to the Sturgeon-Weir and the Churchill Rivers passed immediately to the east. The intention was to get the furs of the Indians, whether they came down the Churchill or the Saskatchewan, before they reached the McGill fort on Cedar Lake. Thus began the long struggle in the North-West between the men from Montreal and the Adventurers of England trading into Hudson Bay.

The Frobisher brothers were however, ready with a broad scheme to defeat the English company. They had

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abandoned Fort Frobisher on the Red River and had taken into the "common concern" a Frenchman named Blondeau, who had long traded on the Assiniboine River. Blondeau's part was, while gathering furs at his fort below Portage la Prairie, to get enough pemmican to bring all the canoes of the partnership out from Lake Winnipeg to Lake Superior. Freed by this arrangement, in 1773-4 the Frobishers passed up the Saskatchewan and wintered near the Whitey Narrows at Cumberland Lake, about ten miles east of the site of Cumberland House, which Samuel Hearne was to build a year later, while a certain Bartholomew Blondeau, who must have been co-operating with them, built Isaac's house on a beautiful low bank of the river north of Melfort and Fairy Glen, Saskatchewan, where the remains of the post can be seen today. It was near the prairies and was usually called Fort des Prairies. While it got its own harvest of furs, it could collect great supplies of buffalo meat and of pemmican, with which, doubtless, it provisioned the Frobishers' canoes for the outward journey.

This was not the whole of the far-reaching plans of the Frobishers. They wanted to penetrate into that wonderful beaver country in the valley of the Churchill. But in the wooded north they could not get the provisions necessary to bring the furs out. The Frobishers' solution was simple. The pemmican of the Saskatchewan from Fort des Prairies would await the canoes of the north in the neighbourhood of Cumberland House or of The Pas and provide the provisions to take them out to River Winnipeg, where pemmican from the Blondeau fort on the Assiniboine would be at hand. Acting on some such arrangement, Joseph Frobisher in the

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spring of 1774 passed from his house on Cumberland Lake northward by the Sturgeon-Weir River to Portage du Traite on the Churchill. There he met the Indians going down to Fort Churchill with their furs for the Hudson's Bay Company.

Sir Alexander MacKenzie says: "It was indeed, with some difficulty that he could induce them to trade with him, but he at length procured as many furs as his canoes could carry." The furs were really due to the Hudson's Bay Company in return for the equipment given to the Indians in the previous autumn, and they were reluctant to trade them. But Frobisher knew no scruples. Less honest than the savages, he persuaded them to give them to him, and did such a lucrative *trade* that the portage was ever after known as Portage du Traite. Frobisher came off in triumph with his rich harvest, and was provisioned by his partners all the way out to Lake Superior, where Benjamin Frobisher awaited him with goods for the next trade-season.

The creation of the business machine of the fur trade of the North-West with Montreal, which inaugurated the most wonderful chapter in the history of the West, was, as far as we can see, the work of the Frobisher family.

Alexander Henry and the First Western Pool, 1775-6

The Frobishers and Alexander Henry, the elder, were in the first co-operative concern of the West. Henry was called the elder because he had a nephew of the same name who figures also in the history of the West. The elder man lives in history today because he wrote a fascinating book



ALEXANDER HENRY

From an engraving by P. MAVERICK from an original miniature

Celebrated Fur-Trader, Traveller & Explorer

- Alexander Henry -

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about his experiences—*Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories*.

We cannot enlarge here upon Henry's thrilling escape from the massacre of the garrison at Michilimackinac; and reference has already been made to his friendship with Wawa-tam, the Indian to whom he owed his life.¹ After some eleven years spent in the fur trade of Lake Superior, he was attracted by the rich harvest of furs secured by Thomas Corry on Cedar Lake and took his place in the procession of those who were going west to make their fortunes. His partner, Jean Baptiste Cadotte, whose wife had on one occasion saved his life, accompanied him. Putting his outfit in the small canoes made necessary by the shallow streams along his route, Henry travelled from the Grand Portage along the water-way which forms the International Boundary as far as Lake of the Woods. Thence he descended the Winnipeg River to the lake of the same name. The perils of his journey are illustrated by the loss of a canoe and its crew of four men in a storm on the lake. On this, the highway to the rich fur fields of the north, Henry was joined by Peter Pond and, later, by Joseph and Thomas Frobisher and James McGill's partner, Charles Paterson. It was as late in the season of 1775 as October 26, when the party reached Cumberland House, the post of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Frobishers and Henry were shrewd business men. They saw that though they had come in as rivals, they must combine, if they were to compete successfully with the Great Company, and not return with half-loaded canoes. So they pooled their goods and agreed to share the furs and meat

¹ See page 109.

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harvested by spring—thus forming the first co-operative pool of the West.

There are many interesting features in this the first Western pool. We may regard the men who wintered in the North-West and procured the furs as the producers. They were in the "common concern," at present loosely associated with the capitalists who equipped them. Benjamin Frobisher and James McGill found the capital, got the goods for the trade of their close associates, Joseph Frobisher and Charles Paterson, and brought them up to Grand Portage, probably taking five per cent. on their capital and an equitable share in the profits. Henry would put his goods into the pool, but he had his own provider in Montreal. At this time the wintering partners, the producers of the furs, were no more than shareholders in the local pool, each having his own arrangements with his merchant provider in the East. When the capitalists in Montreal were brought into the scheme as partners, the pool took its most complete form in the North-West Company, which was largely the creation of the Frobishers and which became the most efficient business organization in the North America of that day. Its efficiency and success were due to the fact that the capitalists in the East and the producers in the West were now in what they called "a common concern" and shared the profits equitably. There were four rival "interests" in the first local co-operative, one being that of James Finlay, who had come to the Saskatchewan in 1768 and whose fort was side by side with that of the Frobishers, some three miles above the present Fort la Corne. The cellars and chimney heaps of the posts of the four interests may be seen today in three groups within a front

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of about 700 feet. They are on a beautiful reach of the river above which is Paeonan Creek. These remains side by side are the silent witnesses to the pool of more than a century and a half ago.

It must have been the Frobishers who contributed to the "common concern" the principle that the prairie region must be brought to the assistance of the fur trade in the forest of the north. Meat was too scarce up there to make enough pemmican to bring canoes out and on their way to Grand Portage. The Frobishers and Henry went north to occupy a post on the east shore of Amisk, or Beaver Lake as they called it. Their partners, Paterson and Cadotte, went to Fort des Prairies, Isaac's House, to gather furs, and also the pemmican necessary for the homeward journey. From Henry's narrative we can see that the party in the woods to the north had nothing but fish—morning, noon, and night—to live on, with now and then a little moose flesh. During the winter Henry came up the Saskatchewan to Fort des Prairies on snowshoes. He and his Indians nearly perished of starvation on the way. The carcass of a red deer drowned when crossing the first ice in the autumn saved them from a tragic end. But when Henry got to the fort on the edge of the prairies his friends "covered the table with the tongues and marrow of wild bulls" (buffalo). "The quantity of provisions which I found collected here, exceeded every thing of which I had previously formed a notion. In one heap I saw fifty ton of beef, so fat that men could scarcely find a sufficiency of lean." Much of this would be needed for the men at the fort. In the cold climate with nothing but meat, no bread or vegetables, eight pounds of flesh per head was

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the daily allowance! Much would, however, be made into pemmican to take the canoes of the partnership on their homeward way. The provisions from the Saskatchewan would be waiting the canoes of the north near Cumberland House.

After a very interesting visit to an Assiniboin camp, probably in the neighbourhood of the present Melfort, Saskatchewan, Henry returned to the Frobisher Fort on Amisk Lake for the spring trade. Then all moved up to Portage du Traite, where they carried on once more a very lucrative trade. According to the Journal of Cumberland House, their dealings with the Indians were none too scrupulous. Matthew Cocking had sent up Robert Longmore with goods to trade with the Indians, accustomed hitherto to deal with the Hudson's Bay Company. To prevent him from getting their furs, Frobisher and Henry got the Indians drunk, and even locked some of the savages up in their fort, and then coolly had their furs taken from their tents and lodged in the post. They locked an Indian in the fort and made him send a message to Longmore, to whom two bundles of his furs had been given, to say that these must be given to Frobisher and Henry, for otherwise he would not be released. Longmore handed over the furs. But there was a struggle over another bundle, which Frobisher's men dragged out of Longmore's tent, Longmore hanging on to the cord, up to the gate of the Pedlars' fort. Frobisher allowed Longmore to keep the bundle but uttered all sorts of threats, forbidding him to trade with the Indians there. Longmore replied that it was the Hudson's Bay Company's territory, and he would trade where his masters told him to go. In the following

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summer, Frobisher apologized to Longmore for the incident and said that it was all Henry's fault. Needless to say, Henry makes no mention of it in his book. Rival traders in the North-West led a cat and dog life, that never appears in their books.

After a very successful trade, Alexander Henry and Joseph Frobisher left for Grand Portage with the furs, doubtless receiving pemmican from Fort des Prairies for the journey, after they got to the Saskatchewan. Henry was now a man of wealth and left the interior to play the part of a capitalist in Montreal, and even to visit England and France.

Thomas Frobisher who had been of the party went up the Churchill River to Ile-à-la-Crosse Lake, where he built a fort in the immediate vicinity of the present post of the Hudson's Bay Company there—the second oldest permanent settlement in the present Province of Saskatchewan. Joseph Frobisher returned to the Saskatchewan in the autumn and wintered at a new settlement, Sturgeon Fort, at the mouth of Sturgeon River, and five miles west of the present Prince Albert. There he received a letter overland from his brother Thomas at Ile-à-la-Crosse, the first use mentioned in history of a route from the north by Green Lake, which is in use to this day. In accordance with this letter, Joseph went up to the Churchill River at Portage du Traite, doubtless with a much needed supply of pemmican, to meet his brother's canoes. He went with these to Montreal, and, already possessed of a fortune, resided there, playing the part of a capitalist. On the death of his brother Benjamin in 1787, Joseph entered into a partnership with Simon McTavish,

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the firm of McTavish, Frobisher and Company, becoming the agents of the great North-West Company.

Peter Pond, the Precursor of Mackenzie

Peter Pond is a character that intrigues the historian. He was ill-educated, but was gifted with brains. He was one of the most successful of the fur-traders, but never received his due. He was endowed with great intellectual vision, but his life was marred by a fractious temper, which implicated him more or less in two murders. Thus, his spectacular career ended in disappointment and poverty.

Had Pond been able to write himself up as Sir Alexander Mackenzie did, he would have been known as among the greatest of the fur-traders. True he left an account of his life behind him, but most of the manuscript, unfortunately all that part which deals with Saskatchewan and the North-West, was used to light a kitchen fire. What is left shows that it could not have found a place among our Western classics, although the achievements of the man are equal to those of our greatest. Here is an example of Pond's literary style: "I was born in Milford in the countey of New Haven in Conn [Connecticut] the 18 day of Jany 1740 and lived thare under the Government and protection of my parans [parents] till the year 56. A part of the British troops which Ascaped at Bradixis [Braddock's] Defeat on ye Bank of the Monogahaley in Pea [Pennsylvania] the french fortafycation which is now Cald fort Pit Cam to Milford. Towards spring Government began to Rase troops for the Insewing Campaign against Crown point under the Command of General Winsloe. Beaing then sixteen years of age I Gave my Parans

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to understand that I had a Strong Desire to be a Solge [soldier].”

After serving in the war which ended in the surrender of Canada to Britain, Pond devoted himself to the fur trade. His first centre was Detroit. Thence he went into the Upper Country and spent two years in the upper valley of the Mississippi. In 1775 he entered our North-West. Alexander Henry came on him on Lake Winnipeg and the two, along with the Frobishers, travelled together towards Cumberland House. When the Frobishers and Henry formed the first Western pool, it was characteristic of Pond that he did not join, but traced his steps to Lake Dauphin to a field which he could have all to himself. Next year he came up the Saskatchewan and occupied Fort Sturgeon on the north bank of the river above the present Prince Albert, along with Joseph Frobisher and others in a pool organized for that season. He was there for two years, 1776-1778. (Diligent search has not yet brought the remains of this post to light). The Frobisher concern finally got rid of Pond's presence by giving him goods with which to open up the trade in the Athabaska region, in partnership with them. Pond passed down the Saskatchewan to Cumberland House and ascended the Sturgeon-Weir to Portage du Traite and passed up Churchill River to Ile-à-la-Crosse. Taking the water-way by the Deep River (Aubichon Arm), he reached the beautiful Methy Portage (Portage la Loche) which looks down on the valley of the Athabaska River.

Peter Pond was the second European, William Stewart of the Hudson's Bay Company (1715) being the first, to

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cross the height of land into what proved to be the greatest fur field of the North-West. He passed down the Clearwater River to the spot at which Fort McMurray afterwards was built, whence he followed the Athabaska River to within forty miles of the Lake of that name. There, with herds of buffalo and red deer in the brush country to the west affording ample meat for the post and pemmican for the first stage of the voyage out, Pond built what came to be called "the old establishment" and at times Fort Pond. From that region the Crees and Chipewyans used to take their furs all the way down to the Bay to trade at Fort Churchill. Needless to say, they were overjoyed to have a post in their midst which saved them the long and tedious journey to the Bay. As a result Pond got so many furs that he could not take them all out. He left half in his house, and, so honest were the Indians, he found them intact when he returned in the autumn.

Here we come on the restless mind of Peter Pond. He was not content with the successful trade he was doing. He was interested in the Indians. He asked where they lived and what was in the country beyond. Above all he wanted to know where the river, which he learned flowed out of Athabaska Lake, went to. One of his conclusions was that it entered the Pacific Ocean, and he began to dream of following it down to the sea and building a fur fort on the sea-coast. Had he been able to carry out his plans there would not have been much left for Alexander Mackenzie to do after him, but at this point fortune and Pond's own perverse character defeated his ambitions.

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In 1781 Pond seems to have come in late and to have been overtaken by winter and frozen streams when still on his way to Athabaska. At any rate he lodged himself at Lac la Ronge beside one Jean Etienne Waden, although Waden along with Pond was in the Frobisher partnership. The posts of the two traders were side by side on English Bay, the arm of the lake west of the present hydroplane station. (Will some airman not try to locate the spot?) Naturally the traders fell to quarrelling. In February they fought one another, and again one evening in March. Later that night the report of two guns was heard in Waden's house. His clerk went to see what was the matter and saw Pond and a clerk coming out. Within lay Waden, his thigh broken at the knee and bleeding profusely. While his wound was being tended he fell into unconsciousness and died without revealing the story of the tragedy. This terrible event must have made Pond's place in the Frobisher partnership very uncomfortable. The dreadful epidemic of small-pox which followed brought days of disaster to the fur trade and the "common concern" was temporarily dissolved. As an individual Pond had not the resources to follow up his ambitions, least of all when the small-pox had reduced the trade to the verge of bankruptcy.

In the subsequent years, though the Frobisher partnership was renewed, it met with fierce rivalry from the Pangman-Greogry concern which brought Alexander Mackenzie into the North-West. In 1786-7 Pond, now once more in Frobisher's North-West Company, was in his old Athabaska post and a John Ross of the rival company beside him. In the spring Ross was killed in a scuffle, the circumstances

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of which again cast a shade upon Pond's reputation, though the fatal shot was fired by one Piché, a servant at his fort. As a result of the murder all the traders decided to put an end to the rivalry and to unite in one grand company, the North-West Company of 1787. This great and wealthy concern was in a position to carry out the ambitious exploration which Pond had in his mind, and to all appearances the day for the fulfilment of his dreams had come. Indeed, in the winter of 1788-9 Pond made all the arrangements for an extensive exploration to be carried out by Alexander Mackenzie who was now his colleague, but the venturesome fur-trader's position in the company had been made so uncomfortable by his violent temper and the deeds of the past that he sold his share in the trade and left the country. Next year Alexander Mackenzie carried out the exploration. He finally wrote an account of his voyage which carefully omitted all that Pond had done in paving the way for it. As a consequence Alexander Mackenzie lives in the memory of men as the great explorer, and Pond is forgotten. The moral is, if you wish to be famous write a book about yourself, and be sure that you leave everybody else out of the story.

Mackenzie and the Hudson Bay Route

Sir Alexander Mackenzie figures in our books as a "Lord of the North" and as a great explorer. This view does not reveal the man that he was, rather it obscures him from our vision. Its effect upon Mackenzie's biographers is disastrous. For example, Mackenzie's career falls within the years 1785 and 1820—about a third of a century, but his

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best biographer spends 200 out of 387 pages upon the explorations which occupied no more than two summers of that time. As a result there is a gross lack of perspective in the portrayal of the man. The truth is that his two voyages of discovery were but incidents in Mackenzie's long career.

The real Mackenzie was a fur-trader and an organizer of the fur trade. He was by nature a critic and, therefore, a radical. In his acidulous mind the trading system of the North-West Company was put to the test and found wanting. He was, however, also a man of vision and saw the great possibilities open before the fur-traders in Athabaska. His imagination was set on fire by the dreams of Peter Pond, and he devoted himself to making them a reality in his time. As the officer in charge of the Company's business in Athabaska, he chafed at the cost of transportation imposed upon his department by the long water-way from Montreal, by the Ottawa and French Rivers to Lakes Huron and Superior, and, thence by Rainy Lake, Lake of the Woods, Lake Winnipeg, the Saskatchewan and Churchill Rivers to Athabaska. Thus, the key to his life is the search for an easy way to the sea for the trade of the most distant West. Had he been intimately connected with Montreal he might have been content, as was William M'Gillivray, to leave things as they were. He was rather a Westerner in his point of view, and he began the long search of the men of the West for a sea-port of their own. He sought for it first by the Mackenzie River, but he found nothing but a frozen Polar Sea, when he had expected to come out on the open Pacific Ocean. The feeling with which he turned his face homeward may be gathered by the name he gave to his river—the River Disappointment.

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Mackenzie next tried the water-way by the Peace and Fraser Rivers to the Pacific. His judgement appears to have been that it offered possibilities, but it could never be the route of the North-West to the sea. He now set his eyes on Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait. On his way to Montreal from his journey to the Pacific he had a conversation with Governor Simcoe, which the Governor duly reported to the Colonial Office in London. In it he expounded the grandiose scheme which he spent the rest of his life trying to achieve. All the traders of the North-West must be united in one grand company with Hudson Bay as the channel for its goods to the North-West and to the fur trade of the Pacific Coast. This scheme got him into trouble at once with Joseph Frobisher, Simon McTavish, and William M'Gillivray, who were all dominated by the Montreal point of view. These men bought him off for the time by taking him into the firm of McTavish, Frobisher & Company and by giving him an additional share in the North-West Company. But the disagreement over Mackenzie's far-reaching policies continued, and he left the firm and the fur-trading Company in 1799. The next years of his life were spent in a vigorous attempt to get control of the route through Hudson Strait. He tried to get the British Government to force all the fur-traders, including the Hudson's Bay Company, into one grand chartered company using that route for its goods. When that failed, his London associate, Edward Ellice, tried to buy out the Hudson's Bay Company to secure their right of way through Hudson Strait. This also failed. When Mackenzie's business interests brought him back into the North-West Company in 1804, Duncan M'Gillivray who had

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ardently adopted his ideas, carried the day in the Company's meeting. M'Gillivray and Mackenzie were given power in 1805 to offer £2000 a year to the Hudson's Bay Company for the right to bring the North-West Company's goods into the North-West and bring out their peltry by way of Hudson Bay. When these negotiations proved abortive, Mackenzie's fertile mind found another expedient. He attempted to bring Lord Selkirk into a scheme by which his lordship was to buy up shares of the English Company for him so that he could get control of the Company, unite it with the North-West Company, and use a post on the Bay as sea-port of the West. This well devised plan failed when Lady Selkirk's family, owning large shares in the Hudson's Bay Company, persuaded his lordship to retain in his own hands the stock which he had purchased.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie died in 1820. Though he did not know it, when he was on his death-bed, the Wintering Partners of the North-West Company had already decided to drop their agents in Montreal and had invited the Hudson's Bay Company to supply them with goods brought in by Hudson Bay. The year after his death the North-West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company were united. York Factory became the sea-port of the North-West and continued as such till the 'sixties' of last century, when American railways and steamships on the Red River afforded an easier and surer line of transportation. The key to the understanding of Mackenzie, then, is not exploration. He was the first great Westerner, and he spent his life seeking an outlet on the sea for the trade of the West. The idea which he released became a force independent of him, lived on after

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his retirement, and came to its triumph in the union of 1821.

Duncan M'Gillivray and "The North-West Spirit"

Duncan M'Gillivray was almost unknown until his *Journal* of 1794-5, and his *Some Account of the Trade carried on by the North-West Company* came to light some years ago. These turned up in the Library of the Imperial Institute in London. The Public Archives of Canada promptly secured photostat copies. Since then I have published the *Journal*, and the Archives have printed his *Some Account of the North-West Company*. We can now see to some extent the man that M'Gillivray was.

Duncan M'Gillivray was born under lucky stars. He was the nephew of Simon McTavish, one of the most influential partners in the North-West Company from the date of its creation in 1784. Through his uncle's generosity he got a good education in his native Scotland and at length became a clerk in the service of the Company in the North-West. He spent all his years "in the interior" on the North Saskatchewan. We see him in the "Autobiography" of John MacDonald of Garth, his fellow clerk, passing up and down the river from and to Grand Portage on Lake Superior. We know that he was a tall man, and we gather that, while he might be conscious of God's mercy when saved from dangers, his daily life was somewhat godless, as witness John MacDonald of Garth: "We determined to bathe, it being fine warm weather, [neither were swimmers]. I got out of my depth and Mr. M'Gillivray could scarcely save me. He, however, saw me sink and got far enough in, and being a tall

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man he got hold of a lock of my fine long hair and little by little pulled me towards him until he grasped my head and pulled me ashore. I had become senseless but soon recovered. We thought all this was a good day's work, but we soon forgot about God's mercy."

M'Gillivray never took any affront from the Indians without paying them back in kind, and he must have been a terror to the free-traders. On one occasion he ordered a free-trader out of the territory of Grand Portage on Lake Superior which the Northwesters regarded as their own precincts. When the poor man asked by what title he could do this, M'Gillivray said he would soon show him his title and forthwith drew his dagger and cut up the man's tent from top to bottom, while A. N. McLeod, M'Gillivray's companion, threatened to cut his throat. In deeds of this kind he manifested what the Wintering Partners called "the North West spirit," and all the service regarded Duncan with pride and affection as "as fine a gentleman as ever was." !! We may interpret this as meaning that he was a fine fellow to the Northwesters and a terror to their rivals and enemies.

Duncan M'Gillivray will be remembered because his *Journal* is crammed with lively pictures of the scenes which took place at Fort George in the winter of 1794-5, where he was stationed, and where he busied himself with keeping the books, including the Journal of the fort. He thus describes the arrival of the Indians at the fort to trade: "When a band of Indians approach near the Fort it is customary for the Chiefs to send a few young men before them to announce their arrival, and to procure a few articles which they are

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accustomed to receive on these occasions—such as Powder, a piece of Tobacco and a little paint to besmear their faces, an operation which they seldom fail to perform previous to their presenting themselves before the White People. At a few yards distance from the gate they salute us with several discharges of their guns, which is answered by hoisting a flag and firing a few guns. On entering the house they are disarmed, treated with a few drams and a bit of tobacco, and, after the pipe has been plyed about for some time, they relate the news with great deliberation and ceremony, relaxing from their usual taciturnity in proportion to the quantity of Rum they have swallowed, 'till at length their voices are drowned in the general clamour. When their lodges are erected by the women, they receive a present of Rum proportioned to the Nation and quality of the Chiefs and the whole Band drink during 24 hours and sometimes much longer for nothing—a privilege of which they take every advantage—for in the seat of an opposition [the Hudson's Bay Company's Buckingham House] profusion is absolutely necessary to secure the trade of an Indian. When the drinking match has subsided they begin to trade . . .”

Here are a few snapshots of scenes at the fort. “Oct. 10. At night a poor woman who had been stabbed by her husband in a drinking match two days ago departed this life in great agonies—a few moments before she was delivered of a dead child, whom she requested should be interred at her side. She also requested to be wrapped up in a fathom of fine shrouds that she might appear in decency before her ancestors in the land of Spirits . . . Notwithstanding the

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boundless authority of the men [on which M'Gillivray enlarges] a few of the other sex wear the Breeches. Of this number was the unfortunate sufferer in question. She in a fit of drunken jealousy abused her husband in the grossest terms, dragged him by the hair across the fire and was guilty of many acts of violence, which proved her strength to be superior to her modesty. Though the poor fellow stood much in awe of her well repeated corrections, yet this severe discipline before many spectators roused his passions. He snatched hold of a dagger and stabbed her in eight places and, notwithstanding every assistance was immediately administered, her life could not be saved. Soon after another woman was carried in to dress a severe bite which she had received from her husband, The Two Hearts, on the fleshy part of her arm." Spats between husbands and wives have continued down to our time, but fortunately our methods of redressing our wrongs take milder forms.

"Oct. 23—The Tailleur a Beaver River Indian arrived in a miserable condition, having been pillaged of his wife and baggage by two young men from whom he narrowly escaped with his life. Soon after another Cree arrived in pursuit of his wife, who eloped a few days ago. They give mutual consolation to each other over a pot of rum."

"May 11—The day of our departure being now at hand we indulge ourselves in all the amusements of this place—such as riding, hunting & yesterday morning a Band of near 40 Cavaliers issued out of the Fort and after having raced our Horses 'till they were quite exhausted, we changed them for fresh ones at the Fort and fatigued them in the same manner. Bets ran high. Fathoms of shrouds and scarfs and

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even horse against horse were often proposed and accepted by the men. They are apprehensive that the natives will steal them this summer and are therefore resolved to enjoy them while they can." The society at a fur-trading post began the season with a dance after the arrival of the canoes, and ended with races held on the eve of the departure of the "brigade" with the furs for the East.

Montreal Traders Cross the Rockies

Duncan M'Gillivray will be remembered for his lively Journal, depicting the scenes enacted at Fort George on the North Saskatchewan in the trading season of 1794-5. More important still, his name will live in our history as the disciple of Sir Alexander Mackenzie. If Mackenzie was the first Westerner, M'Gillivray was the second. All Duncan's life "in the interior" was spent on the Northern Saskatchewan. He rose from the position of clerk to be Wintering Partner in the department of Upper Forts des Prairies. After 1799 his main interest was in Rocky Mountain House at the foot of the mountains. Here he was at the end of the long line of transportation from Montreal, just as Mackenzie was at Lake Athabaska. M'Gillivray had to compete with the Hudson's Bay Company whose forts were beside his own. He realized the advantage they enjoyed in the short route to and from England by Hudson Bay. Like Mackenzie he aimed at securing control of that route for his Company. Then, too, M'Gillivray like Mackenzie was in a frontier department facing towards the Pacific. He took up enthusiastically Mackenzie's plan of entering into what is now British Columbia and pre-empting its trade for his Company and for Britain, and, like Mackenzie, he saw that this could only

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be done successfully if his Company were to be able to use the Hudson Bay route.

In 1801, his last year in the interior, M'Gillivray crossed the Rockies into the valley of the Columbia River. Geographical names mark his footsteps. On David Thompson's map the Rockies about Banff are "Duncan's Mountains," the Kootenay is "McGillivray's River." The portage from the Kootenay to the Columbia was known as M'Gillivray's Portage, and a pyramidal mountain in Athabaska Pass was "M'Gillivray's Rock." The next year Duncan went "out," as the traders used to say, to Montreal to become agent of his Company. During the rest of his life (he died in 1808, a comparatively young man) he devoted himself to achieving the goal set before the Company by Sir Alexander Mackenzie. Under his presidency the Company decided to offer the Hudson's Bay Company about \$10,000 a year for the right to use the Hudson's Bay route. M'Gillivray crossed the ocean to England twice to conduct the negotiations, but was unsuccessful. It was also under the presidency of M'Gillivray that the Wintering Partners, assembled at Fort William, decided to cross the Rockies and reach towards the Pacific. The orders to Simon Fraser to go up the Peace River and build forts beyond the mountains and to explore down the Fraser, which everybody then thought was the Columbia River, must have gone out under the signature of Duncan M'Gillivray.

Simon Fraser, if we may judge by his Journals, was an ill-educated man compared with Mackenzie or M'Gillivray. In spite of his achievements he never rose to high position

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in the North-West Company. None the less, he must have been a man after M'Gillivray's heart, for he had the great gifts of superabundant energy and a dauntless will. Under his direction a first outpost was built beyond the Rockies—at McLeod Lake—in 1805. In 1806 he followed Mackenzie's footsteps to the Fraser River and, ascending its tributary, the Nechako, built a post at Stuart Lake, Fort St. James as it came to be called. It is the oldest permanent settlement in the present province of British Columbia. That summer he built also a post on Fraser Lake. These three posts along with Fort George near the present Prince George have been occupied down to our day. It is interesting to think that they are the oldest European settlements in our British Columbia—half a century older than Victoria and three-quarters of a century older than Vancouver.

Fraser was not the man to rest quietly in the new territory which, by the way, as a true Scotsman he called New Caledonia. He interpreted his instructions to mean that at the earliest possible opportunity he should explore the great river which he thought was the Columbia. From Mackenzie's experiences on it he must have known that he would have to face the hostility of the Indians and the dangers of wild rapids and terrible whirlpools. He knew himself, however, to be past-master in the subtle art of handling the Indians, and he believed himself endowed with physical strength and courage equal to the difficulties and dangers before him. The Indians he won by always sending word before him that he was coming to visit them. Thus he never came upon them as a surprise, was never taken

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as an enemy come to attack them, but in the main was received as a guest, and at times was lavishly entertained.

Fraser's Journal tells of many interesting encounters with the natives. It also describes many hair-breadth escapes in the rapids of the river and on the perilous portages along the cliffs running down sheer to the stream. Let this pass as an illustration: "Here the channel contracts to about forty yards and is enclosed by two precipices of immense height which, bending towards each other, make it narrower above than below. The water which rolls down this extraordinary passage in tumultuous waves and with great velocity had a frightful appearance. However, it being absolutely impossible to carry the canoes by land, all hands without hesitation embarked as it were *à corps perdu* [in desperation] upon the mercy of this awful tide. Once engaged, the die was cast, our great difficulty consisted in keeping the canoes within the medium or *fil d'eau*, that is, clear of the precipice on one side and from the gulfs formed by the waves on the other. Thus, skimming along as fast as lightning, the crews, cool and determined, followed each other in awful silence, and when we arrived at the end, we stood gazing at each other in silent congratulation at our narrow escape from total destruction."

When Fraser got to the mouth of his river he discovered by its latitude that it was not the Columbia. That counted for little. What was of importance for the plan of the North-West Company was that the river was too dangerous to become a water-way for the fur trade of the Pacific. Interest was now centred on David Thompson's exploration

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of a great river farther south, the real Columbia as it proved to be.

The North-West Company's Columbian Enterprise

Duncan McGillivray, as agent of the North-West Company, was not content with an advance of his Company towards the Pacific on the Peace River frontier. While Simon Fraser was under orders to reach out to the Pacific Coast from the Peace River, David Thompson received his instructions to advance westward from Rocky Mountain House on the North Saskatchewan. Thompson was a far finer spirit than Simon Fraser and much better educated, but, as is often the case with intellectuals, he fell short in the qualities of aggressiveness and rugged courage. His orders were to cross by Howes Pass, as we call it, at the sources of the Saskatchewan over to the great river beyond, the Columbia as we know it, and to follow this upstream to McGillivray's River, the Kootenay of today, and to build a post on its banks. Because the preparations for his expedition made the year before by a half-breed, Jaco Finlay, who was to cut a trail across the divide and build a canoe on the river, were inadequate, Thompson found himself delayed and, as a consequence, short of provisions when he reached the lakes in which the Columbia takes its rise. Instead of taking the supreme risk which had become natural to the adventuresome Northwesters, he stayed his journey and built his first post on the Columbia about a mile below Lake Windemere (1807). As it proved, he nearly starved there, while he would have had a sufficient food-supply from the Kutenai Indians had he pushed on. It was only the next

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year that the post was built on the Kootenay River as planned by M'Gillivray.

That year the fates suddenly cut the thread of Duncan M'Gillivray's life. The anxieties of the last months of the career of this energetic agent of the North-West Company were concerned with the cost of the transportation of goods all the way from Montreal to the region beyond the Rockies. He busied himself writing his *Some Account of the Trade carried on by the North-West Company*, the main object of which was to call the attention of the British Government to his Columbian enterprise. He shows the value of the Company's trade to English commercial men and manufacturers, and politically to the British Empire. He states definitely that it involved a serious loss to bring the furs all the way from beyond the Rockies to Montreal for shipment to England. He tells of the plan of the Company to establish a depot "on the side of the Western Ocean," first winning the friendship of the Indians by posts built along the water-way. His last sentence runs: "It is conceived that all this cannot be accomplished without the aid of the British Government, which will scarcely be withheld from an effort of such commercial and political consequence." What M'Gillivray had in mind, no doubt, was Mackenzie's policy. The British Government was to compel the Hudson's Bay Company to enter into a union with the North-West Company, which would put the Hudson Bay route at the disposal of the Montreal merchants and enable them to escape from the heavy costs of transportation from the North-West and British Columbia to the port on the St. Lawrence. With this short and cheap route at their command the united com-

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panies would take possession of the fur trade of the Pacific in the name of Great Britain. It was indeed a grandiose scheme.

Duncan M'Gillivray died in the spring of 1808. His lamented death in all probability relaxed the effort of the Company to reach the Pacific at the mouth of the Columbia. At all events David Thompson, in great contrast with Simon Fraser, was displaying the leisureliness of the intellectual. When his second post was built in 1808 at the Kootenay Falls, not very far above Kootenay Lake, the logical step was to press on down the Kootenay to the Columbia River, when he would have had an easy water-way to the Pacific Ocean. There can be no doubt that such would have been the course of an Alexander Mackenzie or a Simon Fraser. By a strange error of judgement Thompson went across country to build Kullyspell House on Pend Oreille Lake in Idaho. His attempts to find a water-way from that point to the Columbia failed.

What made Thompson's misjudgement fatal was that John Jacob Astor was planning to effect an American settlement at the mouth of the Columbia before the Canadians took possession of it and to pre-empt the whole region for the United States. So little was Thompson interested in the Columbian enterprise that in 1810 he took his family across the Rockies to go out to Montreal. At Rainy Lake he must have received peremptory orders to return and to reach the mouth of the Columbia before the Americans. In this hour of crisis he again was found wanting. The Piegans were indignant at him for arming their enemies the Kutenais, and the Flatheads on the other side of the Rockies and beset his

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brigade of canoes which, thereupon, returned precipitately to Rocky Mountain House. Thompson, unfortunately, was not with his men, and when he got word that the Piegans were after him, fled as he says, for his life. Alexander Henry, the younger, now in charge of Rocky Mountain House, got the Piegans dead drunk and sent off the canoes once more, the men being willing to proceed if properly officered. Meanwhile Thompson was hiding in a bluff far down the river. Apparently, when Henry came to him he refused to go through the Piegan country, though that would have got him to the coast before the Americans. He probably advanced the valid reason that he had ordered the horses to be brought away from the pass, and, therefore, that it would be impossible to get the goods carried across the mountains. He insisted on taking the safe course by the Athabaska Pass, though he had to cut a trail to it through the bush country. The result was fatal, for the Americans arrived at the mouth of the Columbia by way of Cape Horn in March and when Thompson came upon the scene in July the Stars and Stripes were floating on the breezes of the Oregon. David Thompson's lack of drive and his strange errors of judgement began that long succession of events which gave what is now the States of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, to the Americans. Naturally he says nothing of his failure in the Columbian enterprise either in his journals or in his book. Next year he left the North-West never to return. Thompson was a man of many fine parts. Unfortunately for his reputation, he was placed in a sphere which called for vigorous action, and, like many an intellectual in such a situation before and since, he was found wanting.

CHAPTER VIII.

Men of the Hudson's Bay Company

Charles Bayly, First Governor of Rupert's Land

Charles Bayly was the first Governor overseas of Rupert's Land, the Hudson's Bay Company's Territory. He enjoys the distinction of being the only governor to pass out of jail to govern a British colony. He was in some humble way very intimate with King Charles II., for two letters of his to His Majesty exist in which he reminds the King of what his father Charles I used to tell him as a boy, and recalls that, when last they met, the King (Charles II) had asked him to warn him of any danger to his throne. Charles Bayly, therefore, must have been with the King when a lad in some humble capacity as companion or gentleman-in-waiting. He seems never to have lost the feeling that he was responsible for the conduct of his former charge, though now a man and upon the throne. This must have been accentuated by his becoming a Quaker, for he had an intensely religious sense that he should warn others against their evil ways. At any rate, he wrote a letter to His Majesty, telling him that he had promised to warn him of impending danger, and now he saw the whirlwind of the Lord descending on England because of the evil ways of the men who surrounded the throne, and he warned the King against his licentiousness. The result was that Bayly was lodged in the tower of London.

For six long years Bayly lay in the Tower without trial. No jury or court could have convicted him of treason, for, in truth, what he was trying to do was to keep the King on

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his throne, not to put him off it. As it happened, the Constable of the Tower, was Sir John Robinson, Deputy-Governor of the newly formed Hudson's Bay Company. Thus, the scheme to get Bayly out of the Tower must be attributed to him. Bayly petitioned the King-in-Council to give him his freedom, on condition that he should go into the service of the Hudson's Bay Company overseas. This was granted. In this way Sir John Robinson rid the King of the nuisance of Bayly's letters, did justice to an upright man, and got his Company an honest governor overseas. The gates of the Tower opened, and Charles Bayly passed out of prison to be governor of the King's most recent colony, Rupert's Land. It adds to the piquancy of the situation that he sailed to Hudson Bay in a ship owned by the King himself, the *Wivenhoe*, and that his first official act as Governor of Rupert's Land was to annex Port Nelson, and by implication the vast area including the Saskatchewan and the Red Rivers drained by the waters which form the Nelson River, to England in the name of His Majesty the King.

Bayly made a good and enterprising governor. The English were installed on the Bay in virtue of their discovery of the region and its annexation to England by Thomas Button at Port Nelson and Thomas James on James Bay. Bayly kept up these claims by his explorations into the mouths of the rivers, the Moose, the Albany, the Severn, the Nelson, and the Eastmain and by his proclaiming the regions English territory in the name of the King, but he re-enforced England's claims in two very important ways; he made treaties with the Indians, by which in return for gifts, they gave up their rights to the soil to the Company. Of equal and indeed of more

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importance was it that he established English settlements at the mouth of several of these rivers. Of course, he found Charles Fort built on the Rupert by the expedition which went out in the *Nonsuch* in 1668. To this he added a post on Hayes, now Factory, Island in the Moose River opposite Moosonee, the terminus on James Bay of the Toronto and North Ontario Railway; and a post on Bayly's Island in the mouth of the Albany. He visited Eastmain River to gather isinglass for export, and his name lingers in Bailey's Island off its mouth.

When the Company found that its ships had at times to winter on James Bay, because the rivers froze before they were ready to leave, Bayly suggested making a depot on Charlton Island, from which the ships could sail at later dates. The goods were to be conveyed thence in sloops to the several posts. When he was recalled in 1679 he had worked out a complete system of business for the Company.

Bayly's relations with the Indians were very happy. To prevent his men from getting into quarrels with the savages and to guard against smuggling, he forbade the entry of Indians into the fort, except when the chiefs came on their ceremonial visits to the Governor in his quarters. He made treaties with Prince Attash on whose region Charles Fort stood and sent him on a visit to London. When the savages gathered about the fort for a feast, the Governor provided the precious Brazil tobacco for the occasion. In fact, Bayly got on well with everybody but Groseilliers and Radisson. When Father Albanel came to Charles Fort on a missionary tour, but really to win the Frenchmen back to the service of

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France, Bayly treated him leniently. He and Groseilliers and the French doctor Romulus were free to go down to the beach for their devotions. Even the *coureurs-des bois* who came to the post were well treated. There is in existence a letter written by one of them who tells of Bayly's kindly entertainment of him and how he slept with the Governor in his own bed. The differences with Groseilliers were over the policy of the Company. For example, the Frenchmen wished to go into the interior and, at Moose River in particular, to do no more than visit the Indians in the autumn and spring. Bayly felt that Moose River with its many tributaries was a much more profitable site than Charles Fort on the Rupert, and he made it his headquarters. In the issue Bayly's policy justified itself.

Governor Bayly was recalled in 1679. The prisoner of the Tower returned, as he had gone out, in a ship owned by the King, the *John and Alexander*. Once more in London, he stayed with one of the important members of the Company, as a guest in his house on the Strand. Unfortunately, he died about a month after. He was buried at the expense of the Company, and as was fashionable at that time, at night. In the gloom of evening the body was borne from the Strand to St. Paul's, Covent Garden, opposite the present famous market, the procession being lighted on its way by bearers of torches. Beside the grave in the body of the church, the Governor, the Committee, and members of the Company, and officers of the King's ship which brought him home, paid their last respects to the former prisoner of the Tower, the first Governor of Rupert's Land.

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James Isham, a Chief Factor With Initiative

The most conspicuous governors in the overseas service of the Hudson's Bay Company after Bayly were James Knight and Henry Kelsey. As these have been treated in other connections, they must be passed over here. Their importance lies in their holding office in the times after the struggle with the French was over, and when the discipline to prevail in the service had once more to be asserted and good traditions created. They were followed by a number of efficient governors in the several forts on the Bay, but life in these posts was very quiet and there was little opportunity for officers to distinguish themselves, otherwise than by their efficiency in business.

Of the governors in the Company's service between Henry Kelsey's day and the time when the opening up of posts in the interior offered the opportunity for a more conspicuous career, James Isham was the ablest and most interesting officer in the service. He was placed in charge of Prince of Wales's Fort on the Churchill for the winter, during which Captain Middleton wintered there (1741-2) before his search for the North-West Passage, undertaken by Admiralty as a result of the charge of the Irishman, Arthur Dobbs, that the Company knew an easy way to the Pacific but kept it secret in the interest of their monopoly. When Dobbs insisted that the Company had bribed Captain Middleton to report that he had found no North-West Passage, his supporters, who were really more interested in pushing into the fur trade than in discovering the North-West Passage, sent out two ships, the *Dobbs Galley* and the *California*, ostensibly

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to continue the search. These ships undertook to winter at York Fort, though the Churchill offered much better accommodation. Isham maintained the Company's monopoly successfully, while showing the Company's traditional hospitality towards the intruders. The truth is that Isham got on much better with the two captains than they did with one another. Each captain thought the other was plotting to murder him and both turned to Isham for protection and support. When Captain Smith took refuge at York Fort with his wife Kitty, apparently the first European lady to set foot on the soil of these parts, Isham entertained them and advised the captain to let time cool the hostility of his colleague. The wisdom of the advice was evidenced in the subsequent reconciliation of the two hot-headed navigators.

When, subsequently, it appeared that Arthur Dobb's supporters intended to send an interloping expedition to build a rival post at the mouth of the River Nelson, it was Isham in charge of York Fort that forestalled the invasion by building a post for the Company. He established Cumberland House, the first of that name, on the south shore opposite Flamborough Head. As the interloping expedition did not appear on the scene, the fort was soon closed. The incident, however, is not without its importance, for the Governor and Committee decided that there should be an exploration of the Hayes and Nelson Rivers, with a view to the establishment of a post in the interior, preferably at Split Lake on the Nelson, and sent out a contraption with a wheel recording its turns as it was dragged after the operator, this to measure the distances. Isham chose Anthony Henday for the task. Needless to say, the recording wheel broke

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down in the rough country traversed, but Henday accomplished the round journey successfully. That Isham was on the alert is shown by his next move. The French forts at The Pas and at La Corne across the water-routes taken by the Indians coming down to the Bay, were seriously diminishing the volume of furs passing through York Fort. He immediately (1754) sent Anthony Henday with a band of visiting Indians on his remarkable voyage into the interior "to view the country." Henday penetrated the continent to within sight of the Rockies and returned to York Fort within the space of twelve months. This inaugurated a new phase in the business of the company, one in which servants voyaged into the interior, each with a band of Indians and brought them with their furs, as far as possible, past the French posts. Isham contemplated establishing posts in the interior, to which the Indians would come, and by which they would be saved from the long journey to the Bay. Sites were considered on Moose Lake, and on Little Playgreen Lake, at the north end of Lake Winnipeg, where Norway House was built afterwards. The outbreak of the Seven Years' War, and the recall of the French officers to Canada for the defence of the colony made this unnecessary, but the plan shows that Isham was an alert Governor, equal to the occasion.

A manuscript written by Isham shows him in a light unusual with fur-traders. He was interested beyond the ordinary in the world around him. He described the animals and birds in the country around him, and, what is most remarkable, added an occasional pen-picture, some-

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times coloured. He displayed an equal interest in the natives, their ways of living, their implements, and what not. That he was endowed with an artist's instinct is shown by his description of the Indians arriving at the fort in a great brigade, pitching their tipis, and the chiefs entering the fort in a ceremonial procession to visit the Governor. He reports a typical speech given by the old chief at the head of the bands. "You told me last year to bring my Indians. You see I have not Lyd. Here is a great many young men come with me, use them Kindly! Use them Kindly, I say! Give them good goods, give them good goods, I say! We lived hard last winter and in want, the powder being short measure and bad, I say! Tell your servants to fill the measure and not to put their fingers within the Brim; take pity on us, take pity on us, I say. We Come a Long way to see you, the French sends for us but we will not hear. We love the English. Give us good Brazil tobacco, black tobacco, moist and hard twisted. Let us see it before op'ned. Take pity on us, take pity on us, I say! The Guns are bad. Let us trade Light guns, small in the hand, well shap'd, with Locks that will not freeze in the winter, and Red gun Cases. Let the Young men have Roll tobacco Cheap, Kettles, thick, high for the shape, and size, strong Ears Give us Good measure in Cloth. Let us see the old measures. Do you mind me? The young men Loves you by Comming to see you, take pity, I say—and give them good goods. They love to Dress and be fine. Do you understand me?"

William Tomison, Chief Inland

The opportunity for officers of the Company to earn distinction came when posts were to be opened in the in-

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terior. Samuel Hearne was sent in and established Cumberland House. Doubtless he would have left his mark on the history of the Saskatchewan region, had he remained at that post, but he was speedily withdrawn to the command of Prince of Wales's Fort on the Churchill, only to be subject to the humiliation of its capture by the French Admiral La Pérouse. Matthew Cocking succeeded to him, but had soon to retire on account of ill-health. It thus fell to William Tomison to organize the Company's trade on the Saskatchewan. By building or supervising a succession of posts, he left his mark upon the history of the country.

Tomison entered the Company's service when twenty-one years of age as a "labourer," first at York Fort where servants were usually trained for their duties, and then at Severn Fort. Reference has already been made to his voyages of exploration to the region of Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba in 1767 and 1769. He had now so far approved himself to the Company that he was placed in temporary charge of Severn Fort on two occasions. He entered the phase of his career which marks him out in a very special way when he was sent up to Cumberland House. After a number of expeditions up the Saskatchewan with goods, he was made Chief Factor at Cumberland House, with the duty of organizing the trade of the vast river. It was under his directions that Robert Longmore went up the North Saskatchewan to get beyond the posts of the Pedlars and so secure the furs coming down from the more distant parts of the great river. Longmore spent the winter at what has been called Upper Hudson's House in opposition to no less than four pedlar firms combined in a pool for the

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season's trade. The settlement was known as Fort du Milieu, the Middle Settlement, the post at Sturgeon River west of Prince Albert being the Lower Settlement and that at Eagle Hills, where Cole was killed that year, being the Upper Settlement. The remains of the post may still be seen about five miles below Wingard Ferry. In the following autumn, 1779, Tomison himself built Hudson's House whose remains lie in the Nisbet Forest Reserve about thirty miles west of Prince Albert. Here Tomison proved himself the redoubtable champion of the Hudson's Bay Company against the officers of the North-West Company, who built a rival post over against his.

It was under his instructions that the South Branch House was built on the South Saskatchewan, and he himself built Manchester House in 1786, on Pine, or as it is now known Spruce Island, at the mouth of the Big Gully and north of Paynton, Saskatchewan. Tomison was now "Chief Inland." He made his headquarters usually in the most distant post and supervised the others on his way down to York Fort with the furs. He exercised his authority as chief even over York Fort when he was present there to meet the ships from England.

In 1792 he built Buckingham House on the west side of the creek on the north bank of the North Saskatchewan, north of Vermilion, Alberta, where he had the North-West Company in opposition in Fort George on the east side of the creek. The relations of the men in the two forts were often strained but at times could be cordial. In the trading season of 1794-5 Tomison was in Buckingham House and Duncan M'Gillivray in Fort George. Entries in M'Gillivray's Jour-

nal speak for themselves. "We have had several quarrels with our neighbours this winter in which we have always come off victorious; this they attribute to our Superior numbers." This may include a reference to a clash with Mr. Tomison recorded in the autobiography of the boastful John MacDonald of Garth. Tomison had dug a well in the creek, as being more convenient than the Saskatchewan which was much farther away, and he allowed the Northwesters to draw from it. As the season was very dry and the well appeared to be failing, Tomison forbade the Northwesters to use it. Boastful John was sent to deal with them. "Mr. Tomison would not listen to any reason, indeed I had little to give him—but that if he would not give us our wants that either of us must pay a visit to the bottom of the well. This argument rather startled him and we got our share of the water ever after." A happier episode was that of March 22, when the Northwesters saw Buckingham House on fire. They rushed across the coulee and helped to extinguish the flames. "Soon after, we received a letter of thanks and an invitation to pass the evening at Mr. Tomison's, where all our differences were accommodated over a dish of tea."

That spring, 1795, Tomison built Edmonton House, the first of that name, over against Fort Augustus, a mile and a half above Sturgeon River, Alberta, and near the present Saskatchewan Settlement. About this time the famous York boats were being introduced into the transportation system of the Company. They were a great advance for they were much safer on the lakes and could bear sail much better than canoes. Moreover, with much the same crew they carried nearly twice as much freight. In this connection posts were

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built under Tomison's instructions on the water-way between Lake Winnipeg and York Fort. The goods were brought up to Gordon House at the Rock on Hill River, 1794, and Jack River House, the predecessor of Norway House, was built on Little Playgreen Lake. Gordon House was a depot at which boats from York Fort exchanged the European goods and took the furs from the interior. In 1798 Oxford House was established midway between the two. Seven days were thus saved to enable the Englishmen, if possible, to get to wintering-grounds before the Northwesters.

In 1799 Tomison was stabbed in the leg back of the knee by a worthless Indian who brought nothing in his hands yet demanded goods. The effects of the wound were such that the Chief Inland's restless journeying from post to post came to an end. He made Cumberland House his headquarters, for the most part. In 1803 he retired from the service. However, he returned to the country and served in obscure posts on the Churchill River. A stern disciplinarian, he was not popular with the service, though he seems to have been both just and efficient. He appears to have managed the Indians well, while always keeping them in their place. That he was a good and faithful servant of the Company may be gathered from the dislike shown towards him by the Northwesters. In old age harsh features in his character appear to have been accentuated, and he was heartily disliked both by the Indians and by his fellow servants.

Philip Turnor, First Surveyor of the North-West

Till 1934 Turnor was little more than a name in the history of the North-West, but in that year Mr. J. B. Tyrrell

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with the cordial assistance of the Hudson's Bay Company, in whose archives Turnor's Journals and maps lay, published a volume which enables us to see the part played by the man in the bringing much of the northern part of the continent within the ken of his generation.

In the early seventies the Pedlars were pushing their way and establishing their forts in a country which, to a large extent, had hitherto been the preserves of the Hudson's Bay Company, in the sense that the Indians brought their furs down to its posts on the Bay. This forced the Company to take the aggressive and to build posts in the interior. It is true that its servants for some twenty years had been travelling up the Saskatchewan to the prairies and knew the country, but they were for the most part simple labourers and their journals could not give the Governor and Committee a clear view of the land. In order to have an intelligent policy of advance into the interior, the Governor and Committee felt that a surveyor should be sent out to map it and to report on its water-ways. They applied to Mr. William Wales, a mathematician, who had relations with them through his sojourn at Churchill Fort to observe the transit of Venus, and he recommended Philip Turnor, who appears to have been a farmer with some experience as a surveyor.

The Company's plans were to establish a screen of posts towards the height of land on the water-ways leading from Canada by which the Pedlars came in, namely, on the Moose River and its tributaries, towards Lake Abitibi and again towards Lake Superior at Michipicoten. Then, too, it was intended to build posts up the Saskatchewan and to enter into the Athabaska region. The task assigned to Philip

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Turnor was to make such a survey of these regions and to produce such a series of maps with the sites of forts on them as would enable the Company to see what it was doing. This Turnor did, and the Company placed his maps in the hand of the great cartographer Arrowsmith, who incorporated them with other materials in his map of North America. Though Arrowsmith's map was several times revised, the part of it which he owed to Turnor remained stable. Through the greater part of the nineteenth century the knowledge which the world had of the map of Rupert's Land was given to it, through Arrowsmith, by Philip Turnor. This, surely, was a great achievement on the part of the former farmer of Laleham, Middlesex, and places him among the notables of the history of the North-West.

As the Company sent Turnor out in the first place to York Factory and the Saskatchewan, it must have considered this the line of advance of greatest importance. In the spring of 1779 Turnor passed up the great river on the ice to the Fort du Milieu of the Pedlars, whose latitude he made to be $53^{\circ} 0' 32''$. The remains are within less than half a mile of the point indicated. When news of the attack of the Indians on the Upper Settlement, Pangman's fort, and the murder of Cole came in, Robert Longmore and Philip Turnor packed up their furs and left for Cumberland House, believing that, as all their goods were already traded, it would be wise to retire. They had more stuff than their canoes could very well take, and all this may explain why Turnor did not make a detailed survey of the river. Besides, the route was well known. When, however, Turnor went up to Athabaska and as far as Great Slave Lake, he made a most careful survey,

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for, though the route was known to the Pedlars, it was unknown to the Company's men. He, therefore, felt called upon to give succeeding travellers careful directions. Here is his journal (in part) covering the first day out of Cumberland House. "1790, Sept. 13th, Monday, at 7¼ A.M. embarked at Cumberland House went in Cumberland House Lake N.E. 1½ mile and turned a point or neck of land; then went NE & E 6 miles; then NE ½ N 4 miles in a part about 2 mile wide; then NW ½ mile; N ¼ mile; N & W ½ W mile in a part not above 300 yards wide, easy current; then N & E 2 miles nearly along the middle of a swampy bay about two or three mile wide; then NWW 1 mile in a part about ½ mile wide; then NNE ½ E 3 mile along the west side of a bay about two mile wide; left the bay and entered a narrow (the bay continuing three or four miles NNE); went N & W 1 mile in a part about ¼ mile wide, a large part of the Lake then opens [This is Namew Lake of our maps]; went NE 3 miles along the SE side, the lake about 1½ or 2 mile wide to NW; then went NE 8 miles, the lake about 5 mile wide to NW and 3 mile wide to SE of us; and put up at 7 P.M. at the mouth of a small River, up which [the Sturgeon-Weir River] we are to proceed to the Churchill River [for Athabaska]." So careful is Turnor's survey that we know exactly where the weir, built by the Indians to catch sturgeon, stood, giving the river its Indian name which the Europeans have translated as Sturgeon-Weir River. It was seven and three-quarters of Turnor's miles above the point where the Goose River flows into the Sturgeon-Weir from the east.

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From his survey of the Saskatchewan, Turnor went by a sloop from York Fort to James Bay, to survey the rivers of those parts. In 1780 he travelled to Gloucester House, the post farthest up the Albany River and surveyed the stream downwards to Albany Fort.

In 1781 he surveyed the Moose and its tributary, the Missinaibi, and crossed the height of land to Michipicoten River and the shore of Lake Superior, thus putting his survey in proper relation with the Great Lakes.

In the following years he surveyed the Abitibi River, and even took a journey to the Canadian post on the Ottawa River at Lake Temiskaming, to co-relate his survey with the known valley of the Ottawa. He spent the winter of 1789-90 at Cumberland House in preparation for the survey to Lake Athabaska, to the Slave River and to Great Slave Lake. At the east end of Athabaska Lake he got information which led him to believe that a short route to that distant lake might be got by way of Reindeer Lake. While waiting at York Fort for the ship for England, he took a journey up the Nelson towards Chatham House. It was on this trip that he suggested that the Hudson's Bay Company might find a short route from Split Lake by Burntwood and Churchill Rivers and Reindeer Lake to the rich fur region of Lake Athabaska. In 1792 Turnor left the country for good. He died in 1800, after completing his maps.

Turnor had carried out the task set for him by the Hudson's Bay Company with credit to himself and his employers. But teachers know that their influence passes down to future generations through their scholars. By the arrangement of the Company, Turnor spent the winter of 1789-90, before

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starting on his survey to Athabaska, teaching David Thompson the art of surveying. Unfortunately for Thompson, he had fractured his leg in the previous winter, and was not sufficiently recovered to accompany Turnor on his arduous journey. Accordingly, Peter Fidler, who had spent the winter at the house on the South Branch of the Saskatchewan, was taken as a substitute and trained by Turnor during the summer to be his assistant. Both Thompson and Fidler proved apt pupils. In their persons Philip Turnor's influence passed down to the next generation.

Peter Fidler, Surveyor and Fur-Trader

Peter Fidler was born at Bolsover in Derbyshire, England, in 1769. Nothing is known of his early education, but it must have been good, for he became an expert surveyor with but few months of training under Philip Turnor at Cumberland House in 1790. If we may judge by a comparison of his journals with those of David Thompson, his was the broader mind of the two. At least, he was more interested in the country he passed through, and in the past of the fur trade; he mentions the posts passed, who built them, and when they were abandoned, while Thompson's journals are those of the surveyor pure and simple.

Peter Fidler's mind was probably a much more cultured one than David Thompson's, for he gathered a library of some five hundred books which he left in his will to be the nucleus for a library in the Red River Settlement. This means that Fidler got a consignment of books from time to time and occupied his mind with them during the periods of quiet enjoyed by him in the several posts at which he was station-

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ed. In this he surely set an interesting example to the men of our day. He was no less industrious than Thompson in keeping his diary and placing on record his surveys and explorations, for in his will which survives, he left four or five vellum bound volumes, a fair copy of the narrative of his journeys, and with them his astronomical, meteorological and thermometrical observations and his manuscript maps, to the Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company. These are carefully preserved in the Archives of the Company but have not yet been published. The result is that at present Thompson is the great man and Fidler a comparatively obscure figure. However, we know enough to be able to say that Fidler was an excellent surveyor, an intrepid explorer, and one of the most interesting personalities of his day in the North-West.

Fidler accompanied his teacher, Philip Turnor, on his survey to Lake Athabaska and Great Slave Lake, 1790-2. Another man might have thought that, when his chief was keeping the official survey, his assistant might save himself the trouble of keeping his own journal. Not so Peter Fidler. His Journal is a valuable commentary on that of Turnor, and especially illuminating are the sketch maps with which he illustrated it, showing, for example, the shore of a lake and indicating any post that stood, or had stood, on it. In the autumn of 1792 he surveyed the whole water-route from Cumberland House to Buckingham House, over against the the North-West Company's Fort George, on the left bank of the North Saskatchewan, north of Vermilion, Alberta. Thence he was sent to winter among the Piegiens, to learn their language and to trade. He spent a part of his time in the south-west corner of the present Alberta, near the

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~~International~~ Boundary and in sight of the Rockies. In 1795-6 he travelled from York Fort to Carlton Fort on the upper waters of the Assiniboine, and made a valuable survey of the route from Cedar Lake across Mossy Portage and Lake Winnipegosis and up the Swan River. In 1799 he was a sort of "Chief Inland" for the Hudson's Bay Company up the Churchill River and arranged for the establishment of the first posts of the Company at Ile-à-la-Crosse, and on Green Lake (Essex House). Going up the Beaver River, he chose the site for the house on Meadow Lake (his Prairie Lake) which he called after his native place, Bolsover House. He personally built for the Company Greenwich House on Lac la Biche, in opposition to a post of the North-West Company. On this trip he surveyed Beaver River, Lac la Biche, and a part of Athabaska River. In 1800 he surveyed the South Saskatchewan to its confluence with the Red Deer River in Alberta, and there built Chesterfield House. In 1802 he built Nottingham House on an island over against the North-West Company's Fort Chipewyan, which was then at its present site.

The Northwesters said that Peter Fidler lacked aggressiveness, that he fell short in the virtue of courage. But it must be remembered that they were men of violence—by this time habituated to wrong-doing. The North-West Company was filled with Highlanders, McTavishes, McGillivrays, Mackenzies, McDonalds, and Campbells and Camerons. They were as loyal to the company as the Highlanders were to their clan, and they felt no more compunction in raiding the posts of the Hudson's Bay Company and running off with its furs and its fishing-nets than the Highlanders of old felt in sheep-

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stealing. When Fidler was at Nottingham House, he was short of provisions because the Northwesters visited violence on the Indians who dared to trade with him. They destroyed his garden and his canoe, and when in desperation, he sent men off to hunt geese, they sent that embodiment of evil, Samuel Black, to shout at the birds and drive them away—to anyone with the sportman's instinct, the vilest of all possible behaviour. It is true that Peter Fidler took all this persecution without retaliation. Why? Because the Northwesters far outnumbered him, and kept what they called "bullies," in one case a prize-fighter, to intimidate and on occasion to do violence to rival fur-traders. Moreover, the instructions of the Governor and Committee at this time were to avoid all clashes with the men from Montreal. While Fidler had his troubles with the Northwesters, his relations with the Indians were of the happiest. His Company's reliance on him was wholly justified.

When Peter Fidler established a house for his Company a second time at Ile-à-la-Crosse, he did tolerably well for two years, but when the North-West Company sent in one of their most redoubtable partners, John Duncan Campbell, a man who had more of the love of a fight than was usual even in the Campbell clan, Fidler was helpless. Campbell built a block-house over against his rival's gate. The bullies maltreated his Indians, stole his wood, cut up his fish lines and nets, and beat his servants if they came out of their fort, until at last the men insisted on abandoning the place. What could Fidler do but close the house? It is rather to the honour of English Fidler that he was not cast in the bandit-mould of the Highland Campbells.

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When Selkirk's Red River Colony became in its turn the victim of the rage of the North-West Company, Peter Fidler was its friend and helper. From his post Brandon House he sent down potatoes, cattle, seed and pemmican for the suffering colonists. In the hour of trial when the other servants of the Hudson's Bay Company stood passive observers of the tragedy of the Colony, Peter Fidler, who had surveyed the lots for the Kildonan settlers, played the courageous part of friend and helper.

Fidler took to himself a squaw in the fashion of the North-West. He was not one of those who flung their women away from them at convenience. He remembered his wife, Mary, in his will leaving her fifteen pounds a year for life to be paid to her in goods from the Hudson's Bay Company's store. The sum, of course, would purchase much more in that day than in ours. His sons Thomas, George, Charles and Peter were to be cared for according to their needs until the youngest, Peter, came of age. Then follows a clause which makes the will the most eccentric on record, surely. From Peter's coming of age, all the money was to be invested and interest added until August 16, 1969, the two hundredth anniversary of Fidler's birth, when it was to be given to the eldest male heir living of his youngest son Peter. If John Fidler aged about eighty, who is at present in charge of the ferry at Fish Creek, is the eldest living heir of young Peter, and if he were to manage to live on for another thirty-eight years, he would, according to the will, come in for a fine fortune. However, diligent search has already been made for the funds in the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Bank of England, and for the property in Bolsover,

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Derbyshire, Fidler's birthplace, mentioned in the will, but no trace of them has been found. I leave it to my readers to decide whether Peter Fidler, who grew very eccentric in his old age, in his will perpetrated a hoax on his descendants to the third and fourth generation.

David Thompson, Surveyor and Fur-Trader

David Thompson is usually thought of in connection with the North-West Company in whose employ he spent most of his years of surveying in the North-West. But this obscures the fact that he was chosen for his accomplishments in mathematics by the Hudson's Bay Company, to all appearance with a view to his being trained to be one of their surveyors. It also tends to hide the facts that he was deliberately told off to be tutored in surveying by Philip Turnor, and that his first years as a surveyor were spent in the service of the English Company.

The diminutive school of surveying at Cumberland House was a great success for both scholars left their mark on the history of the North-West. Of the two scholars David Thompson was in some ways cast in the finer and more intellectual mould. Early left an orphan, he had been trained by charity in the Grey Coat School in Westminster almost under the shadow of the Abbey, where he learned the rudiments of mathematics. Hence his choice by the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, who probably were planning the explorations into the Athabaska region, which came in the years after Turnor had trained his young scholars. We know nothing of Fidler's schooling but may infer from the fact that Thompson was chosen to survey the

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route to Athabaska by way of the Burntwood and Churchill Rivers and Reindeer Lake that David was thought the brighter of Turnor's two scholars. Again, Thompson had the advantage over Fidler in the good fortune by which he served as a surveyor for both the English Hudson's Bay Company and the Montreal North-West Company. Thus he covered a much larger territory than his fellow-student. For the Hudson's Bay Company, while still Turnor's scholar, he surveyed the route from Cumberland House to York Factory by way of Oxford Lake and the Hayes. Later he surveyed the water-route from York Fort to Buckingham House on the North Saskatchewan, north of Vermilion, Alberta, and back to Lake Winnipeg. His most spectacular journey, however, while he was in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, was from the lower Churchill River by Reindeer Lake to the east end of Lake Athabaska, the route which Philip Turnor had thought might be of great service to the Company. The Governor and Committee gave orders for this survey, but Joseph Colen, their Governor at York Factory, failed to put the necessary equipment at the young man's disposal. Nothing daunted, Thompson made his own canoe, got his own equipment, and started out with guides who scarcely knew the way, and, worst of all, were unaccustomed to handling canoes. On the return journey the men fumbled at the ropes when tracking up a rapid and abandoned the canoe to the wild current. Thompson in his canoe, bag and baggage, went over a cascade of some twenty feet and was fortunate to come out alive. Left in the wild north without ammunition with which to hunt by the way, he was in a desperate plight. The party got an occasional mouthful in the shape of

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the young birds—gulls and eagles—in nests discovered by the way, but they were all reduced to skeletons before they had the good fortune to come on two tents of Chipewyans who gave them provisions and nine rounds of ammunition. With these they were able to make their way back to Fort Fairford on the Churchill. Disgusted with the Hudson's Bay Company, Thompson went over to the North-West Company, taking with him the books on surveying and the instruments which the Company had given him as a personal present. However badly Joseph Colen of York Fort may have treated him, he had nothing to complain of in the Governor and Committee, who dismissed Colen from their service in the following year. For his new masters, who were concerned to know how their posts stood in relation to the International Boundary, in 1797-8 Thompson made a spectacular journey of four thousand miles in less than a twelve month. He surveyed the route from Grand Portage through Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods, Lakes Winnipeg and Winnipegosis, up the Swan River and down the Assiniboine to the Souris River. From Fort Souris which stood at this point he travelled in the dead of winter, across the prairies to the Missouri and back to the Assiniboine. He followed this river down to the site of Winnipeg of today and ascended the Red River to its source. Hence he travelled eastward to Lake Superior, showing that the Mississippi was south of the 49th parallel of latitude and, therefore, wholly in the United States. After surveying the south, east, and north shores of Lake Superior, he was able to report to the Company which of their posts were in British territory and which in American lands.

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Another notable survey made by him was up the Sturgeon-Weir and the Churchill and Beaver Rivers to Lac la Biche, Alberta, where he wintered in 1798-99. On his return he surveyed the Athabaska River to the site of Fort McMurray whence he ascended the Clearwater, crossed Methy Portage, and passed down to Ile-à-la-Crosse. Here he took Charlotte, the half-breed daughter of Patrick Small, formerly wintering-partner of the North-West Company in these parts, to wife "in the fashion of the North" where there were no clergymen and no marriage ceremonies. Their honeymoon trip was a strictly business one, taking the furs down to Grand Portage. In 1803 they wintered on Peace River and, thus, Thompson was able to extend his survey to include that water-way and the Athabaska River up to his former survey, which had ended at the site of Fort McMurray. In 1807, as has been seen, he was sent by Duncan M'Gillivray across the Rockies on the Columbian enterprise. In 1812 he left the North-West Company in which he was now a partner.

The records which Thompson kept of all his journeys and the map which he made after retiring mark him out as one of the most outstanding characters of the North-West in the eyes of the historians.

Much more interesting to the general public is the *Narrative of his Explorations in Western America* published for the first time in 1916. Though written after he left the North-West, it shows his intense love of the country whose swamps and forests and prairies he pictures for the reader. It has preserved for us intimate accounts of the habits of the wild animals and even the fish of the West, as given

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by the Indians who knew them so well. Even more important are the pictures he gives us of the ways of the Indians. It is here that we find the story of the first coming of the horse and of the White Man's gun to the prairie regions. Thompson was a graphic story-teller as the following incident will prove:

"The (Chipewyan) Women, until they have children appear to be the property of the strongest Man, that has no woman: One day in the latter end of February, a Chipewyan called the Crane and his wife came to Bedford House (on Reindeer Lake) he was well named, tall, thin, and active, he at times hunted for us. His wife was a good looking young woman, they appeared to love each other but had no children. Six, or seven of us were sitting in the guard room talking of the weather, the Crane was smoking his pipe, and his wife sitting beside him, when suddenly a Chipewyan entered equally tall, but powerfully made. He went directly to the Crane and told him 'I come for your woman, and I must have her, my woman is dead, and I must have this woman to do my work and carry my things'; and suiting the action to the word he twisted his hand in the hair of her head to drag her away; on this the Crane started up and seized him by the waist; he let go the Woman, and in like manner seized the Crane; and a wrestling match took place which was well maintained by the Crane for some time; but his adversary was too powerful, and at length his strength failed, and he was thrown on the floor; his opponent placing his knee on his breast, with both hands seized his head and twisted his neck so much that his face was almost on his back, and we expected to see it break; in an instant we made him let go,

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kicked him out of the house, with an assurance that if he came back to do the same, we would send a ball through him; he seemed to think that he had done no wrong, upon which we told him that he was welcome at any time to come and smoke, or trade, but not to quarrel. After standing a few minutes he called to the Crane: 'You are now under the protection of the White Men, in the summer I shall see you on our lands, and then I shall twist your neck and take your woman from you'."

A. C. Anderson and Historic Jasper

People who go to Jasper Park, like those who hunt for theology in the Bible or who seek for party policies in the British Constitution, get very much what suits their taste. Doubtless the majority are impressed with the grandeur of Nature, a few, perhaps, with the littleness of man. One fears that, for a considerable number, Jasper means no more than good golf or exhilarating rides and climbs. What fascinates the historian with the beautiful scene is its long and continuous role in history, the like of which is found nowhere else in the West, save at Cumberland House and Fort Edmonton.

In 1800 Duncan M'Gillivray of the North-West Company approached Jasper from the east near enough, it must be presumed, to learn from the Indians that he could cross the Rocky Mountains that way to a great river flowing to the Western Sea. That autumn he went out from his post, Rocky Mountain House on the North Saskatchewan and within sight of the mountains, to meet a band of Kutenais between Calgary and Banff, and to learn that he could cross

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the Rockies in that neighbourhood, by what came to be called from him White Man's Pass to another river which ran westward, presumably to the Pacific Ocean. In 1801 he crossed the mountains here, known afterwards as Duncan's Mountains, and penetrated to Kootenay Lake. On his return he crossed Athabaska Pass, where the name M'Gillivray's Rock, or, as it is now called, M'Gillivray's Ridge still marks his footsteps. In spite of the monument to David Thompson recently unveiled in the Park, Duncan M'Gillivray, Thompson's chief, was the White Man to whose wondering eyes the grandeur of historic Jasper was first revealed, Thompson being with him in the capacity of clerk.

Next came David Thompson, the great geographer and surveyor of the West. He was on an urgent journey from Rainy Lake to the mouth of the Columbia River to raise the Union Jack on the shores of the Pacific, before the American expedition organized by John Jacob Astor should arrive. Unfortunately for his plans, the Piegans turned his party back from Howes Pass west of Rocky Mountain House, which had become the usual route. He decided to try Athabaska Pass, his chief's former way across the mountains. Thus he was the second White Man to make his way through by Jasper. After the North-West Company had established its Columbian Department in the country which came to be known as the Oregon, every year the Columbian Express, as it was called, to or from Montreal passed through Jasper, admiring its beauties and cursing the difficulties of the route. They followed the Beaver River to or from Ile-à-la-Crosse. After the union with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821,

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George Simpson, the Governor of the Company, in 1824 followed this route and named the lake at the Great Divide, by which he camped, "The (H. B. Co's) Committee's Punch Bowl." A worshipper of efficiency, Simpson decided that the route by the Saskatchewan to Edmonton and thence by pack-horse to the Athabaska at Fort Assiniboine was the easier and swifter route. From this point the fur-traders ascended the Athabaska to Jasper's House which at that time stood near the outlet of Jasper Lake. Here horses were found and pemmican was provided for the arduous crossing of the Pass.

Till about 1830 the furs from the northern part of British Columbia, then known as New Caledonia, were taken out to York Factory by the Peace and Churchill Rivers, but Simpson, who had recently passed through to the Pacific that way in one of his furious journeys, decided that better connections could be made for the New Caledonia Department with the East by the Fort George on the Fraser and Tête Jaune's Cache, so called from a voyageur blessed with red hair. This route is now followed by the Canadian National Railway through Jasper Park and the Yellowhead Pass. From that time, probably till the railway came, Jasper was the great junction in the fur-traders' transcontinental route, and is mentioned time and again in their journals.

In 1835 a large party from York Factory was at Jasper's House ready to leave for the West. The leader was Duncan Finlayson. With him was James Douglas, afterwards Governor of Vancouver's Island and British Columbia, and Archibald MacDonald, the redoubtable. This party left first for the Columbia. Mr. A. C. Anderson now took charge of the brigade for New Caledonia. It consisted of a party of

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twenty-two. Among these was the squaw dignified with the title of Mrs. McIntosh, returning with her little children to her partner, the Chief Factor of the New Caledonian Department. Unfortunately for them, it was already October and winter came in early that year. They took out the canoes from Tête Jaune's Cache and were proceeding down the Fraser River when they were arrested by ice. As it was not strong enough to bear them and travel by the shaggy banks was impossible, it was decided that there was nothing for it but to return to Jasper's House for provisions, of which they were already in want—a long wearisome journey, surely.

Let Anderson now tell his story: "Our progress was necessarily impeded for the children had to be carried and the snow was already accumulated. After a few days our provisions were entirely exhausted. We expected to go to bed supperless and with no provision for the morning, but no sooner had the illumination from our newly lighted fire spread through the valley when a neighing was heard, and a fine fat unbroken horse which had strayed from the return party, galloped fearlessly up to our camp, apparently delighted to meet again with human beings. With much compunction, for it seemed a heartless act, we sacrificed the poor beast, and the supply we obtained enabled us to go on for two or three days longer. Then suddenly we fell in with a herd of reindeer [caribou] only one of which we shot, and thus from hand to mouth we at length reached Jasper under the light of a full moon, at midnight, about a fortnight after turning back." Jasper's House afforded the woe-begone party but a momentary warmth, for there was little or nothing to

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eat there. On to Edmonton the party trudged with the thermometer forty degrees below zero. At last the four hundred miles were covered, and the warm light of Edmonton shone in their faces. They straggled in in small groups. The last to arrive was Mrs. McIntosh and her little children. Let my readers who may rush onward in a luxurious motor-car or pass through Jasper Park in a palatial train, ask themselves if, for love of life and of their children, they could equal the courage and endurance of dusky Mrs. McIntosh.

CHAPTER IX.

In the Land of Feast and Famine

The Conquest of the Barren Grounds

The Barrens are conquered. That inhospitable region between the valley of the Churchill River and the Polar Sea, described by a graphic writer as like a sea lashed into wild waves by a terrible storm and suddenly frozen solid—this hostile land is at last mastered by man riding the winds in his hydroplane. To those who know the story of the Barren Grounds it is a marvellous change.

In the past only those would venture into this wilderness of hummocks and mossy muskegs who knew the course of the caribou, their favourite crossing-places on the rivers, and their habitual resorts by the lakes. Even they were well aware that they could only carry a few days' provisions walking across the rough country and that, if they missed the caribou, starvation would stare them in the face. Samuel Hearne, the second European to cross the Barrens says: "On these pressing occasions I have frequently seen the Indians examine their wardrobe which consisted chiefly of skin-clothing and consider what part could best be spared (for food); sometimes a piece of an old, half-rotten skin, at others a pair of old shoes, were sacrificed to alleviate extreme hunger." He describes his own course: "It may be said to have been either all feasting or all famine; some times [when they had met a herd of caribou or musk-ox] we had too much, frequently too little, and often none at all Once near seven days we tasted not a mouthful of

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anything except a few cranberries, water, scraps of old leather, and burnt bones." It was in very truth a land of feast and famine.

It is not surprising, then, that from his day (1770-1772) till the last decade of the nineteenth century no white man, except the explorers of the Arctic coast, such as Sir John Franklin, ventured out upon the Barrens—and they only with elaborate and costly preparations. However, from 1889 for a few years and so long as the novelty lasted, a number of sportsmen, mostly English, for sheer love of adventure entered this difficult region. These men knew well the risks which they were taking. One wrote: "This is a strange fascination, but strong as strange, this playing at monarch of all you survey (in the land of the musk-ox, the most inaccessible game in the world); this demand upon your skill and endurance and preserverance in a continuous game of hazard with life as the stake." In this spirit the writer, Caspar Whitney, dared the Barren Grounds on snowshoes in the winter of 1894. Warburton Pike had preceeded him in 1889, and in 1901 David Hanbury entered the region from Great Slave Lake and crossed by the Dobaunt River and Baker Lake to Chesterfield Inlet. On Hudson Bay he was re-equipped by a whaler and successfully braved the winter in the barren land. In spring, he made for the Arctic coast by way of Baker Lake, crossed the mouth of Bathurst Inlet, entered the Coppermine River, and passed westward to Great Bear Lake, and so home—truly a marvellous feat with little more equipment than a gun. A few years ago, Hornby, a prince among the adventurers on the Barrens dared to winter on them again, but met death by starvation.

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But the Barren Grounds are now robbed of their terrors. In these latter times many parties have been prospecting out upon them. For example, a small party is reported to have flown in with a hydroplane carrying an ample food supply and a canoe for exploration. They passed from lake to lake and came home in the autumn, not only with safety, but with ease. The Dominion Topographical Survey, by the use of aeroplanes, is mapping out a land hitherto locked away by its dangers from the sight of White Men. Scores of lakes, rivers, and other physical features, are being placed upon the map of Canada. The Geographical Board is hard-pressed to find names not already in use for these new features. They cannot fall back upon the Indian names, for this wilderness is essentially an unpeopled land. In any case, it is not easy to see how surveyors in an aeroplane could interview any Indians whom they might see wandering in this lone land. If the results of all this prospecting and of this survey brings one-tenth of the mineral wealth of which men dream, the Barren Grounds will soon come into the pale of civilization and be placed on the map as one of the productive areas of the world.

All this is taking place just when Hudson Strait is becoming a highway of commerce. Not only will the Barrens come within the circle of the industrial regions of our land, but they will be on their own water-front, with easy access by rail with the rest of the continent, and by sea with the great outside world. Truly, the transformation taking place under our eyes is fascinating. It is all due to man's power to master the adverse conditions imposed on him by the physical features of the world in which he roams. Contrast

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this triumph over nature with the difficulties and even the sorrows met by those who long ago ventured into the land of feast and famine.

The Hudson's Bay Company Unlocks the Secrets of the Barren Grounds

The capital and seaport of the Barren Grounds was the Hudson's Bay Company's Prince of Wales's Fort at the mouth of the Churchill River, built by their great Governor-in-Chief of Hudson Bay, James Knight in 1717, but Knight's first scheme was to bring the Indians of those parts to trade at York Fort.

Knight was by all odds the ablest man in the service of the Company when it was upholding the claims of England to the Bay and suffering great losses in the cause at the hands of the French. A shipwright by trade, he had rebuilt most of the forts and risen in the service till he had claims to be made Governor of the Bottom of the Bay, as they used to call James Bay. Fortunately for him, he was passed over for Governor Sargeant whose fate it was to be taken prisoner at Albany by Iberville and his troops, come overland from Canada. In 1692 Knight was sent out in command of a flotilla of three ships to recapture Albany Fort. He wintered happily on Gilpin's Island, off Eastmain River, and, after drilling his men in the spring, sailed for Albany River. The commandant and but three Frenchmen were found in Fort St. Anne, as the French had renamed Albany Fort. These necessarily surrendered. Four days later, the annual French supply ship appeared on the horizon. One of Knight's ships

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was sent after her, but she escaped. Knight was liberally rewarded by his Company for the success of his expedition. In 1700 the Company was anxious to have a man of his ability and with his knowledge of the country overseas on its Committee. Accordingly, they made arrangements by which he was credited with the stock necessary for the position of Committee-man. He and but one other of the officers overseas rose to that exalted position.

As a member of the Committee, Knight was sent to the continent during the negotiations for peace to plead the claims of England and of the Company to the country whose rivers drained into Hudson Bay. The plea was successful, and the French ceded Hudson Bay and its rivers to the English by the Treaty of Utrecht, 1713. When arrangements were made for the surrender of the French posts, Knight was sent out as Governor-in-Chief. Along with Henry Kelsey, his Deputy, he received the keys of York Factory, Fort Bourbon as the French called it, from the hands of the French Commissioner appointed for that purpose. Finding the fort in a dilapidated state and, next year, ruined by a flood due to an ice jami, he removed it one mile farther down the river.

Knight's policy was in sharp contrast with that of the French before him. The chief tribe of Indians trading at the post was the Crees. Armed with guns procured at the post, they preyed on the tribes farther afield, and, in particular on the Indians of the Barren Grounds, carrying off their furs and trading them at the fort for more guns and ammunition. The Frenchmen had accepted the furs without cavil. Not so Governor Knight. He proclaimed it as his

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policy that there should be peace within the radius of a thousand miles from York Fort, and he gave many presents to the Crees to win them to trade peacefully with the Indians beyond them. The Crees were preying on the Chipewyans of the valley of the Churchill and driving them out into the Barrens. Knight did his utmost to bring about peace between the two tribes and thus to enable the Chipewyans to come to Fort York in security to trade. His special interest in the Indians of the Barren Grounds was due to a Chipewyan woman, who had been carried off by the Crees into slavery, and who told him of her people and of a river (the Coppermine) where they got copper to make implements and ornaments. She said that there was a great river still farther west (presumably the Mackenzie or the Yukon) where the savages got another kind of metal, a yellow metal with which they made their ornaments. Knight inferred that this was gold.

Not many men can resist the lure of gold. Certainly, Governor Knight could not. His interest in the Chipewyan woman was intense. He determined to exert every nerve to secure the benefits of his peace for the Chipewyans and to bring them to York Fort to trade. Unfortunately, the slave woman, whose information had set Knight dreaming dreams, died. As luck would have it, another slave woman, captured by the Crees from the Chipewyans at the same time as the first one, escaped from her master and, to Knight's great joy, came to the fort. She proved a masterful woman, and Knight sent her and a band of Crees under the leadership of William Stewart, one of his trusty servants, to meet with

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the Northern Indians, as the Chipewyans were called, and to arrange a treaty of peace.

William Stewart, the First European To Cross the Barrens, 1715-16

By dint of generous presents Governor Knight persuaded several bands of Crees to go out into the Barren Grounds to make peace with the Chipewyans. He placed them under the command of his faithful servant, William Stewart. The Chipewyan woman went as guide. Such a large party could not remain together in a desolate region where the food supply was so precarious. It broke up into small bands, taking different routes and hunting in separate areas as they went. Unfortunately, one of these bands, away from the control of Stewart and of the Chipewyan woman, came on a party of Northern Indians, and killed a number, claiming all the while that they wished for peace. The like is not unknown in our day and generation. This unfortunate incident made the peace mission of William Stewart well nigh impossible. Indeed, the Englishman would have failed utterly but for the ardour, persistence, and courage of the Chipewyan woman. When the band of Crees with which Stewart travelled came upon the camp of the Northern Indians, marked by the bodies of the slain, they were panic-stricken and were for immediate flight, certain that the whole tribe of Northern Indians, thirsting for revenge, would fall upon them. But the Chipewyan woman insisted that they should stay where they were, at least for ten days, and she would bring her people to them within that time to smoke the pipe of peace.

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The time had about expired when the slave woman arrived with two of her tribe to arrange for a council. She had the utmost difficulty in persuading her people that, in spite of the slaughter of their fellow-tribesmen, their bitter enemies, the Crees, had come on a mission of peace. The account says that she grew hoarse, so hoarse that she could scarcely speak, with her perpetual talking in persuading them to come to meet the Crees. The Northern Indians insisted on taking every precaution. They came all armed for war, and camped not far from the spot where the Crees lay, now in a fortified camp. A number of the bravest went on with the woman to within ear-shot of the enemy. Then two went with her to the Cree camp to make arrangements for the council of peace. Through the steadfastness of this woman, whose name we do not so much as know, the two hostile tribes, the plundering Crees and the Chipewyans, their victims, were brought together and smoked the pipe of peace. It was agreed on the part of the Crees that there were to be no more raids on the unarmed Northern Indians; and on the part of the Chipewyans, that they should send a number of young men with Stewart and their countrywoman, his guide, to York Fort to learn to be interpreters and to prepare for the inauguration of a regular trade of their tribe at York Fort.

Interesting as the episode is in itself, it pales in interest before the question, where was the council of peace held, and how far into the Chipewyan country did Stewart penetrate. He left York Fort on June 27, 1715, and returned on May 7, 1716. He was, therefore, away 315 days. This implies a very considerable journey, though allowance must

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be made for the fact that the party had to hunt for its provisions as it went. He was about sixty days on the return journey and calculated that the distance was a thousand miles. Knight thought, probably rightly, that it was rather less. As ten miles a day was the usual thing for Indians, though they often did much more, it seems safe to put the return journey at six or seven hundred miles. Stewart crossed seventeen rivers north of the Churchill. After he passed the third river there were no trees, and only when he came to the thirteenth river did he come once more on a wooded area. Thereafter, at each river crossed, the trees became "bigger and thicker." Evidently Stewart crossed the Barren Grounds. His directions bear this out. He travelled north-north-westward from York Fort for four hundred miles; "then they went NWt to cross that Baren Desarts, and when they had cross'd them, they went WNWt and came into a very plentiful Country for Beasts." Manifestly, they were now in the wooded region of the valley of the Slave River, and south of Great Slave Lake. Forty-four years before the British captured Quebec, a servant of the Hudson's Bay Company was in the watershed of Great Slave Lake. Yet the books tell us that the Great Company was unenterprising, and "slept by the frozen sea."

Churchill Fort, the Trading Centre of the Barren Grounds

The scheme of Governor Knight to bring about peace between the predatory Crees armed with the White Man's gun and the defenceless Chipewyans of the Barren Grounds broke down. The blood-feud between the two tribes might be



A Blackfoot Chief.

From oil painting by Ropes

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forgotten for a season when generous gifts were being handed out. It was sure to break out at the least provocation. Moreover, the Crees soon saw that the Chipewyans' furs would compete with theirs at York Fort. Governor Knight had sent the young Chipewyans who came in with Stewart's peace party to winter in different camps of the Crees to learn their language which was the prevailing tongue at York Fort. They were to be the interpreters when men of their tribe came in to trade. But they were grossly ill-treated and fled to the fort for safety and justice. It was with difficulty that Knight got them away by boat to the north bank of the Nelson and past their enemies to return to their own people. There was nothing for it but to build a post to which the Chipewyans could come, as to their own, in safety to trade, Hence Churchill Fort, which, long before the great stone fort was built, was known as Prince of Wales's Fort.

Knight had intended to send the Chipewyan squaw, who had done so much to bring about peace between the warring tribes, to her own people to bring them down to trade, but, afraid that she might be killed by the Crees, he kept her on at the fort awaiting a favourable opportunity for her return. Unfortunately, she died. The Governor was now without any means of communicating with the Northern Indians. By a piece of good fortune, a Cree came in with a captured Chipewyan woman as his squaw. Knight bought her for the value of sixty beaver skins in goods, to be his interpreter at the post on the Churchill River, which he now intended to build as the trading centre for the northern

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people. William Stewart was sent forward, with Mr. Caruthers, the surgeon, and a small party, to the Churchill in a small boat to explore possible sites and to make first preparations.

Knight himself followed with re-enforcements in two small vessels, one of them a hoy, the *Good Success*, built at York Fort for the express purpose. When he arrived off Eskimo Point, the promontory on an island north of the mouth of the Churchill, opposite which the stone fort was later built, he was met by the surgeon, Mr. Caruthers, who reported but little progress. There had been Eskimos at the Point, and Knight was terrified at the news. Moreover, he felt that the Point was too much exposed to the blasts of winter for a fort. He was sure that life there would be unendurable. The only spot feasible for a post appeared to be the point at which Jens Munck had wintered, something more than five miles up the estuary. Though it appeared to be exposed to all the winds of heaven, and there was not enough soil on the exposed rock to bank the houses for winter, he had, perforce, to decide on it. Its chief advantage lay in that it was defensible, an important feature, for Knight feared a possible attack by the Eskimos. For that same reason the palisades were built first, and not the houses.

Knight says that he had never seen such a miserable place in all his life. He says that the area for the site was not as large as that on which the Royal Exchange in London stood. On that site, haunted by the memory of the dead of Munck's expedition and with some of Munck's cannon before his eyes, Knight built what soon came to be called Prince of Wales's Fort. After the palisades were finished,

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the flankers or bastions were built, one at each corner to protect the palisades and the gates. Three of these were occupied by the men; the Governor lived in the fourth, with the provisions and goods immediately under his eye. The wood was got thirteen miles upstream and, as there was a great mud-flat in front of the house when the tide was out, it had mostly to be dragged through the mud to the site. Knight, however, had brought a considerable body of sawed lumber with him from York Fort in the hoy.

In subsequent times Crees from the valley of the Churchill and even from the South Saskatchewan north of Saskatoon traded at Churchill Fort, but its business was pre-eminently with the Chipewyans and their kindred tribes. In addition to this, there was profit in seal-oil and whale-oil made in the region. Then too, Henry Kelsey, who succeeded to Knight as Governor-in-Chief on Hudson Bay, inaugurated a trade with the Eskimos by sloops sent up the coast, the West Main as it was called. Later still, an attempt was made to promote a whale fishery at Marble Island off Rankin Inlet. In a good year the trade of the post would be worth 14,000 or 15,000 beaver skins.

A surprising feature is the range of the trade with the Chipewyan tribes, the Dénés as the whole group is called. The tribes north and east of Great Slave Lake, and those about Lake Athabaska, all spent the winter in the shelter of the wooded area. As this was the winter home of the caribou also, they found a sufficient food supply. When the caribou wandered out into the Barren Grounds in the spring, the Indians followed them, in fact, followed their food supply. A group of what the men at Churchill Fort called trading

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Indians, middlemen in fact, grew up. These got European goods at the fort, and traded them for furs with the various tribes both in their winter homes and out on the Barrens. When their harvest of furs was gathered, they made a quick march over the Barren Grounds to Churchill Fort. Thus the trade of the post extended to the wide region from the sources of the Churchill to the basin of Great Slave Lake. Indians from as far away as Peace River frequented Churchill Fort, not to mention again the savages from the prairies north of Saskatoon.

The Tragic End of Governor Knight

All the while that Governor Knight was establishing Churchill Fort, he was dreaming a golden dream. The Chipewyan squaw had told him of the precious copper to be had on our Coppermine River. The Indians, she said, took up sand out of the river and picked out nuggets and grains of yellow metal, which Knight inferred correctly to be copper. But she told him that the natives living on a great river farther west, which would be our Mackenzie or the Yukon, gathered a different kind of yellow metal, which Knight argued must be gold, and made their ornaments of it. Though Knight must have been well nigh three score years and ten of his age, he determined to make his fortune and that of the Hudson's Bay Company. He questioned his Indians eagerly to find out whether he could sail along the coast to these rivers, but they could not assure him that he could so do. He, therefore, made up arguments to suit his desires, as people do all too easily. He inferred from the fact that the trees beyond the Barrens grew larger and larger that there was a mild sea in

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those parts giving moisture to the forests. It was all too easy to assume, as many did after him, that, if he could get round the north-west promontory of Hudson Bay, he would follow the shore in a south-west direction into an increasingly mild climate.

Leaving Henry Kelsey to succeed him as Governor-in-Chief, Knight went to England and persuaded the Governor and Committee to fit out an expedition to pass along the north shore of the continent, as he supposed, to the mouth of the copper river, and to that other stream in which gold was found. He sailed from London in May, 1719, in a ship accompanied by a sloop. When he did not return that autumn, it was assumed that he was wintering on the Bay or had found the long desired North-West Passage to the rich marts of China. He did not return at the end of the second season, but one of Kelsey's expeditions to the Eskimos reported coming upon articles which, it was assumed, had been procured from Knight's party. The story of Knight's fate as usually told in our books is based upon a statement of Samuel Hearne. It runs to the effect that for something like forty-five years Knight's fate was unknown, that he had sailed out into utter darkness never to return. It was only in 1769 that ships of the Company in search of black whale off Marble Island, near Rankin Inlet, found a convenient harbour on the east coast of the island and came on the remains of a house, a number of graves, and the wrecks of the two ships sunk in five fathoms of water. The figurehead of the chief ship put an end to all doubt. Here Knight's expedition had come to disaster. Samuel Hearne,

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who was to take up the quest for the copper mine in succession to Governor Knight was with the whaler and got the story of the fate of the founder of Churchill Fort from an aged Eskimo of the neighbourhood.

Knight's ships were damaged when entering the harbour. The party, fifty strong as the Eskimo thought, built a house to winter on the spot. Marble Island was no more than a summer resort of the natives. When they returned from the mainland next summer, the number of the Englishmen was greatly reduced, and those left were very sick, doubtless of that dire scourge, the scurvy. Weak as they were, they were trying to enlarge the long boat, probably to hazard the journey down the coast to Churchill Fort. When the Eskimo came back the following summer but five Englishmen were alive. Let Samuel Hearne describe the tragic end: "In the summer of one thousand seven hundred and twenty-one, they only found five of the English alive, and those were in such distress for provisions that they eagerly eat the seal's flesh and whale's blubber quite raw, as they purchased it from the natives. This disordered them so much, that three of them died in a few days, and the other two, though weak, made shift to bury them. Those two survived many days after the rest, and frequently went to the top of an adjacent rock, and earnestly looked to the South and East, as if in expectation of some vessels coming to their relief. After continuing there a considerable time together, and nothing appearing in sight, they sat down close together, and wept bitterly. At length one of the two fell down and died, and the other's strength was so far exhausted, that he fell down and died also, in attempting to dig a grave for his companion. The skulls and

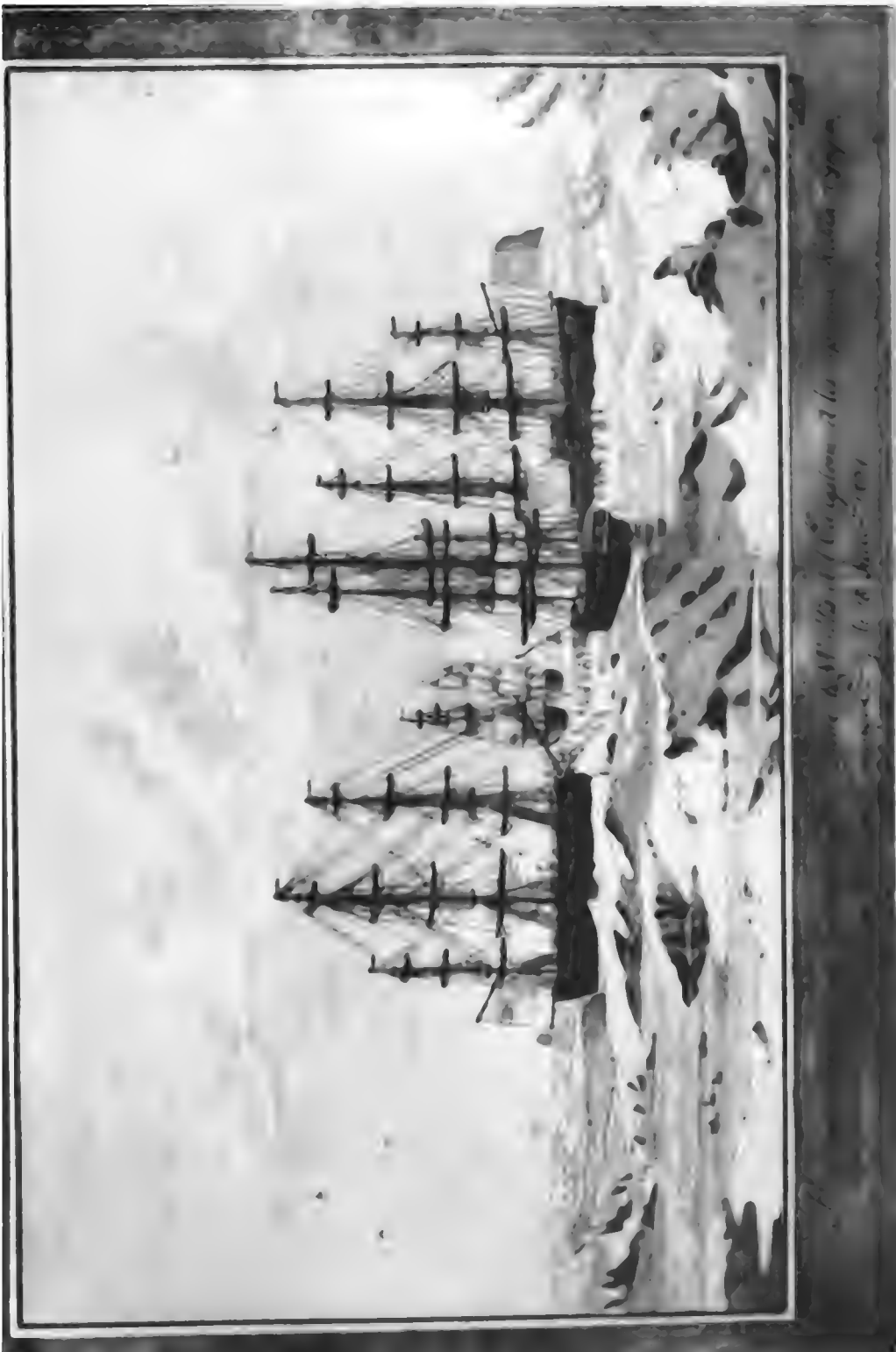
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other large bones of those two men are now lying above-ground close to the house. The longest liver was, according to the Esquimaux account, always employed in working of iron into implements for them; probably he was the armourer, or smith."

Such is the picturesque if sad story told by Samuel Hearne. The truth, however, is that one of Governor Kelsey's sloops in command of a Captain Scroggs was ordered, while trading with the natives, to keep a watch for traces of Knight's expedition. Scroggs visited the snug little harbour on Marble Island and saw the remains of the expedition and of the ships. He reported that the whole party had been killed by the Eskimos. The truth is probably midway between these two accounts. It is more likely that the savages would not dare to attack Knight's party at the beginning when it was in full strength. The graves at the spot show that it was decimated by disease. When the party would be reduced to small numbers and those weakened by sickness, the Eskimos would find their opportunity and massacre them. They may have spared the smith and his companion to do them the service of making iron implements for them. Just at what stage Knight succumbed cannot be known. Aged as he was, like Sir John Franklin, he may have met his fate before the final scene. This search for gold, as so many others, brought the seekers to a tragic end.

Samuel Hearne Crosses the Barrens to the Polar Shore and Great Slave Lake

We hear much of the exploration of the West by the men of the North-West Company, like Alexander Mackenzie,



Two Masted Vessels at Longport, N. H. from N. H. 1894.
June 18, 1894

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Simon Fraser, and David Thompson, but little of the equally great achievements of the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, such as William Stewart, Anthony Henday, Matthew Cocking and Philip Turnor. The explanation of the difference is that the Northwesters wrote books about themselves, but the journals of the English Company's men are simple reports of their doings, day by day, rendered to their masters and have been too often buried in the Archives at Hudson's Bay House, London. Samuel Hearne is the one great exception. Fortunately for his reputation, in 1782 he was taken prisoner by a French admiral in the stone fort at Churchill, the massive ruins of which are the wonder of the visitor to Fort Churchill today. The admiral was so struck with the genius of the man and with the value of his Journal, that he handed it back to him, released him, and let him go home to England on condition that he publish the story of his journey to the Coppermine in book form. The result is Hearne's *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort on Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean*, one of the most fascinating books on the Canadian North-West.

For all that, Hearne's exploits have been compared unfavourably with the achievements of Sir Alexander Mackenzie. Did not Hearne fail twice in his attempt to reach the Coppermine before he finally succeeded? Did he not take eighteen months to reach the Polar Sea and return, while Mackenzie accomplished his journey in 102 days? Yes, but look at the difference in the conditions. Mackenzie's course was a simple one—to follow the stream all the way to the ocean. The only point at which he had any difficulty was in

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finding the outlet of his river from Great Slave Lake. Samuel Hearne's path was over a trackless wilderness, and for guides he had to rely on the fickle Indians of the Barren Grounds. Mackenzie had little difficulty with his men, for they were the disciplined servants of the North-West Company. He had no trouble about provisions, for there was stored in his large canoe sufficient to take him to the ocean and back. Samuel Hearne was travelling on foot, and he and his men could carry, in addition to their equipment, only enough food to last for a very few days. The Indian men could not be persuaded to carry loads. That was squaw's work; the sphere of lordly man was to hunt. Hearne's task was far and a way more difficult than that of Mackenzie, yet he finally carried it out to a successful conclusion. He mapped out a large portion of the area bounded by the Slave River, the Arctic Ocean and Hudson Bay, and much of the country he traversed was not seen again by White Men for a century and a quarter; some of it is only being placed on our maps today, because it can now be surveyed by aeroplanes. Hearne's was by all odds the most difficult task accomplished by any in the long line of our western explorers, and he accomplished it by sheer patience, persistence, and courage.

Hearne owed much of his success to the faithful guide whom he ultimately found in Matonabee, an Indian trader at Fort Churchill, and to Matonabee's stalwart wives. Matonabee as good as said that Hearne's early failures were because he relied too much on the men. He should take squaws unto himself; they would do all the carrying and at

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very little cost, "for, as they always stand cook, the very licking of their fingers in scarce times, is sufficient for their subsistence." It does not appear that Hearne took this advice. The next best course was for Matonabbee to hitch in his stalwart wives to haul Hearne's equipment and the pemmican which they made for him from time to time. "Matonabbee prided himself much on the height and strength of his wives, and would frequently say, few women would carry or haul heavier loads." He was the greatest hunter on the Barren Grounds, and it was probably due to him that venison was procured from time to time. The wives, of course, carried the meat to the camp, made it into pemmican, and dressed the skins for clothing, and, finally, carried the meat and equipment as they journeyed onward. So Samuel Hearne, a lone White Man, living with the Indians and as an Indian, trudged on foot westward to a point east of Slave River, then northward to the Coppermine Hills and River and the Polar shore. On the way home he passed south-westward to the north shore of Great Slave Lake, crossed it in dead of winter on the ice and passed up the Slave River. Here in a land of plentiful game—buffalo, moose, and the like—the Indians began making pemmican for the return journey. Travelling north-eastward they got back to their outward track and followed its general direction home to Fort Churchill. Taken all in all, there is no achievement to the credit of the great explorers of the West which can be said to surpass this.

Hearne gave the world its first suggestion of the position of the Polar shore of the American continent and of the direction in which it runs.

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Sir John Franklin and the Pitiless Barren Grounds

The next venture upon the Barrens after that of Samuel Hearne was undertaken by Captain, later Sir John Franklin. There was a concerted plan to penetrate through the North-West Passage and to delineate the north shore of America. Lieutenant William Edward Parry was to push westwards through some strait north of Hudson Bay, while Captain Franklin was to travel by the fur-traders' route to Lake Athabaska. In fact, he journeyed up the Saskatchewan to Fort Carlton and thence to Ile-à-la-Crosse, and so north, his party taking the usual route up the Churchill, after wintering at Cumberland House. His plan was to reach the Arctic Sea at the mouth of the Coppermine, whose position had been fixed by Samuel Hearne. He would then explore eastward to meet Parry. He wintered at Fort Enterprise, as he called his temporary quarters, about midway between Great Slave Lake and the Coppermine River. Through indolence the Indians provided but a small portion of the promised pemmican for the journey. On July 20, 1821, the party launched two frail birch-bark canoes on a stretch of open water, between the mouth of the Coppermine and the polar ice to the north. They had pemmican to last them but fifteen days. Surely, these men took their lives in their hands.

The party paddled eastward for 650 geographical miles, marking out for all time the course of the north coast of our continent. On August 4, Franklin was delineating the shores of Bathurst Inlet and naming it after Lord Bathurst, then Secretary of State for War and the Colonies. As they went along, he and his men could see the caribou grazing near the

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shore but, if they were to spend time hunting, they would do little exploring and could not reach the point at which they hoped to meet Parry. To their great honour, they risked their lives to carry out their orders and accomplish their mission. Now and then they were able to shoot duck and geese and an occasional caribou at their encampment. On Bathurst Inlet they were fortunate enough to kill three caribou. On August 14, at Melville Sound they had pemmican for but three days' consumption, yet they pressed on. They saw many caribou, but on account of the flatness of the country they were seen by the shy game and could not get near them. On the day before they turned their faces homeward at Point Turnagain (Aug. 22), the allowance of food was a handful of pemmican and a small portion of portable soup to each man per day. As game would be scarce along the Polar Shore, Franklin decided to return by Bathurst Inlet and over the Barren Grounds, for so might he fall in with the rear-guard of the migrating caribou, or with the musk-ox in their natural home. As they paddled towards Bathurst Inlet "the privation of food under which our voyagers were then labouring, absorbed every other terror," even that of crossing Melville Sound in the birch-bark canoes before a wild and heavy sea. Franklin's calculation was correct. On August 24, on Bathurst Inlet with but enough pemmican for one meal, they killed three caribou, and next day two more.

So long as the party was travelling by canoe, they could carry considerable quantities of meat with them, but a short way up "Hood's River," they had to take to foot. Out of their large canoes they made two small ones and easy to carry, with which to cross the rivers. They now began

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the trying march of 550 miles to Fort Enterprise, their base beyond the Coppermine. But here came in one of the "terrors" of the Barren Grounds. Travelling on foot with your equipment, you can only carry enough provisions for a few days. On August 31 they killed a musk-ox, but they could only carry a portion of its flesh with them. Two days later they were fortunate enough to kill two musk-oxen and one caribou, but three days later still they had no more than the half of a partridge, shot as they travelled, for each man. Soon they were reduced to making soup out of the moss on the rocks. In this plight the party staggered on, now having a superabundance, now starving. It proved, indeed, a land of feast and famine to them. They might have come through without disaster had all the men been of the stuff of which Franklin and his Englishmen were made, but the sufferings of the march broke down the morale of the half-breed servants. They began to steal the little food to hand and to eat what they shot without sharing it round. To escape the load of the canoes the carriers broke them, and thus caused a delay of over a week at the crossing of the Coppermine River—a delay which brought the party to the extreme verge of starvation. Another voyageur threw away the fishing nets which would have provided an ample supply of fish from the lakes and rivers. Finally, one man, an Iroquois, turned cannibal and shot and ate one of his fellows, that he might live. He then shot midshipman Hood, Franklin's officer. Finally, the doctor of the party, John Richardson, shot the cannibal to save the life of himself and Hepburn, Franklin's servant. Thus the brilliant achievement of Franklin's party was darkened by the stains of blood.

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Had the expedition been on foot in our day, it would have been watched by hydroplanes and would have been brought to safety in a few hours, or at least it would have been provisioned for its inward journey to safety, for the navigation of the air has gone a long way towards robbing the Barren Grounds of their terrors.

The difference which the conquest of the air has made in the way of robbing the Barrens of their terror may well be illustrated from the story of Sir John Franklin's final attempt to solve the problem of the North-West Passage. It was known that Lancaster Sound to the far north was much less encumbered with ice than Fury and Hecla Strait south of it. Through the brilliant exploration of the polar shore of the continent east of Franklin's Turnagain Point, carried out for the Hudson's Bay Company by Peter Warren Dease and Thomas Simpson, it was known that there is apt to be open water near the continental shore during the short summer season. This was in keeping with Franklin's own experience. The Admiralty drew up a plan based on this knowledge. An expedition was to penetrate westward through Lancaster Sound and Barrow Strait, and then turn southward to reach the continental shore west of Simpson Strait; it would then take the streak of open water to be found along the coast during the summer and pass westward to Bering Strait and the Pacific Ocean. The Admiralty did not wish Sir John Franklin to be in charge of the expedition, for he was then but a few months short of sixty years of age, but the gallant explorer pressed his claims, and, of course, he knew more about the problems of Arctic exploration than any one else.

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The Admiralty yielded reluctantly against its better judgment.

In May 1845, Franklin sailed in the *Erebus*, accompanied by Captain Francis Crozier in the *Terror*. The party wintered at the west end of Lancaster Sound. When spring came, it penetrated through Barrow Strait and turned southward. Hopes must have run high on board the two ships as they approached the region explored by Dease and Simpson and the streak of open water along the continental shore. One fact, however, had been left out of the calculations of Franklin. The open water along the continent was due to the islands to the north checking the drift of the ice southward on to the mainland, and there was a great jam of ice on the north shore of the islands and in the straits between them. In the early days of September Franklin was approaching this jam. On September 12 he was little more than a hundred miles from the waters explored by Dease and Simpson west of Simpson Strait, but, as it proved, he was in the jam of ice. About twenty miles off the north-west shore of King William Island he was held fast. All that is known of the proceedings of the party may be gathered from a document left by it on the shore of the island and found in 1859. It runs in part: "1848 H. M. Ships *Terror* and *Erebus* were deserted on the 22nd April 5 leagues NNW of this, being beset since 12th Sept., 1846. The officers & crews consisting of 105 souls under command of Captain F. R. M. Crozier landed here Sir John Franklin died on the 11th June, 1847, and the total loss by deaths in the Expedition has been to this date 9 officers and 15 men."

UNDER WESTERN SKIES

It was a desperate venture to attempt to reach safety by a march across the ice to the continent and over the Barren Grounds to civilization. Here and there on the west and south shores of King William's Island graves mark the course of the party. The survivors got across Simpson's Strait, for graves have been reported as at two places there. The plan must have been to get to Back's River and to follow it upstream along Back's track to Great Slave Lake, and safety, living on the caribou and musk-ox of the Barrens by the way. Those whose strength carried them farthest got to Montreal Island and there perished.

The whole civilized world was profoundly moved by the disappearance of Sir John Franklin's party into the unknown polar seas and by his failure to return. No less than thirty-nine expeditions were sent out in search of him, most of them by sea. It is interesting to imagine what would be done in a similar case now-a-days. The search would be by airplanes, possibly equipped with skis. One group of planes would be told off to supply gasoline and the like to the searching parties. In a very few days the advance planes would report the lost expedition as found, and a wireless message would explain the steps being taken to bring away the crews imprisoned by the ice. All the world would be informed over the radio in a few hours that the party was safe and returning to civilization.

Such has been the conquest of the air that the Barren Grounds and the far north have lost most of their terrors for us.

A detailed map of the Northwest Territories of Canada, showing the international boundary with the United States. The map is divided into several regions: BARREN, CREES, BLACKFEET, BLOODS, and SNAKES. Major rivers include the Mackenzie, Peace, Athabasca, and Red Deer. Large lakes like Great Slave Lake and Lake Athabaska are shown. Numerous forts and settlements are marked, including Ft. Chipewyan, Ft. McMurray, Ft. George, and Ft. Vermilion. The map also shows various passes, such as Yellowhead Pass and Athabasca Pass, and the locations of the Hudson's Bay and North-West Company trading posts.

International Boundary

